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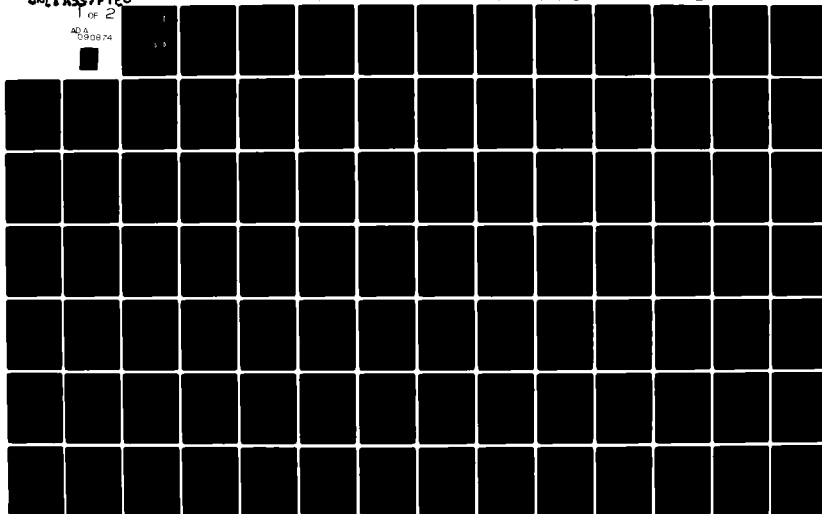
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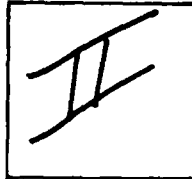


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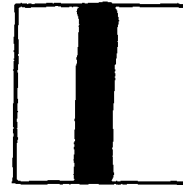
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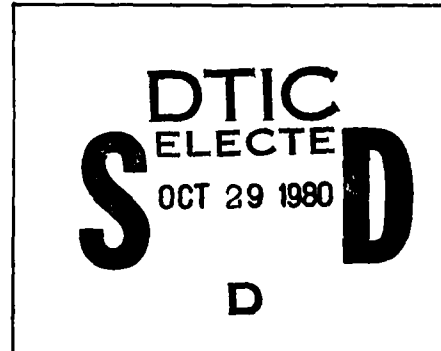
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THE ROLE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
IN THE EAST BENGAL CRISIS OF 1971

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A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements of the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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1973

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the individual student author and do not necessarily represent the views of either the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In December, 1971, the tension between Pakistan and India created by the Pakistani army's suppression of the independence movement in East Pakistan flared into open warfare. Perhaps the most surprising aspect of this drama on the Indian subcontinent was that the outbreak of hostilities found the People's Republic of China on the side of its long-time arch-enemy, the United States, supporting the right-wing military regime of General Yahya Khan against India, and her ally, China's former friend and benefactor and a "fraternal Socialist country", the Soviet Union. The decision on the part of Peking to back the regime in power rather than to seize the opportunity to further her long-professed desire to foster and support "wars of national liberation" would seem to constitute a puzzling contradiction between Chinese foreign policy pronouncements and the actions that Peking actually employs in the world arena to further her attainment of national policy objectives.

Problem Statement and Importance

This paper will examine China's decision to support Pakistan during the East Bengal crisis in 1971, in order to determine whether that decision constituted a contradiction in the light of Peking's previously professed support for revolutionary movements, or "wars of national liberation".

Stated explicitly, the hypothesis which is to be explored is that China's support of Pakistan rather than of Bangla Desh is not contradictory when viewed in the context of the entire spectrum of foreign policies which Peking has pursued since 1949, and when the exigencies of the international situation faced by the PRC in 1971 are considered. (Quale)

It is natural to expect some degree of consistency between a government's pronouncements and its behavior. If no such consistency exists, or if we are too often taken by surprise by the manner in which a nation reacts to a given situation, then quite possibly our own image of that nation's policy objectives is faulty and needs to be re-examined lest it lead us to make a serious miscalculation.

By isolating and examining this one instance of a seemingly contradictory foreign policy decision by the PRC, and attempting to see what it might reveal about Peking's

perception of the risks, costs and benefits involved, we may be able to evaluate the validity of our own images of China's foreign policy goals and the means that she is likely to use to achieve them.

Assumptions and Purpose

In order to establish a basis for the analysis of any particular aspect of Chinese foreign policy, it is first necessary to make the assumption that China is a rational national actor.¹ That is, that the leadership in Peking is guided collectively by the dictates of rational behavior. As Thomas Schelling has pointed out in his book, Strategy of Conflict, the characteristic feature of the rational national actor is:

. . . not just intelligent behavior, but . . . behavior motivated by a conscious calculation of advantages, a calculation that in turn is based on an explicit and internally consistent value system.²

¹There are, admittedly, problems inherent in such an assumption. First, whether or not China's actions can, indeed, be regarded as rational depends upon the perspective of the observer. Then, too, the use of the rational actor model itself is considered by some scholars to impart an undesirable degree of artificiality to the system being examined, because it permits the analyst to largely disregard those internal decision-making processes which undoubtedly contributed significantly to the formulation of the policies or decisions being analyzed.

²Thomas Schelling, The Strategy of Conflict (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 4.

Since our knowledge of the decision-making process within the Chinese government is limited, we are forced to try to deduce Chinese interests from Chinese actions. If, in order to do so, we assume that the PRC leadership does manage to compromise on a relatively unified approach to foreign policy issues, we can then side-step the problem of trying to determine whether the views of any one person, faction or institution prevailed in the debate which led to a particular policy decision. Instead, by using the rational actor model, we can simply say, "China did this", or "Peking decided to act in this way", without worrying about who did what to whom in the process.

It is not expected that this paper will resolve any of the inherent difficulties or problems connected with analysis of the foreign policies of the PRC, or that it will provide universally applicable answers which then can be used to make firm predictions concerning future Chinese actions. Rather, its more limited aim is to shed some light on the reasons why, in this one instance, China acted in a manner which can be interpreted as being contradictory and inconsistent with what many people felt to be one of its principal foreign policy objectives.

Obstacles to Research

Research into current developments, policies and

decisions within the People's Republic of China is, by nature, a frustrating and imprecise process. It is characterized by efforts to develop solid and reliable data while having to rely heavily on inference drawn from rumor, press releases, radio broadcasts and the observed (however dimly) actions and reactions of various leadership factions and other elements of the PRC policy making apparatus.

In addition, since all of a nation's foreign policy objectives cannot be maximized simultaneously, the foreign policy analyst is faced with the problem of trying to determine which options a nation perceived as being available to it in a given situation, and which of its objectives it chose to maximize - given the costs involved in implementing each of its options. In the case of the PRC, this problem is exacerbated because of the difficulty of satisfactorily defining Chinese foreign policy objectives. Indeed, there exists today a broad diversity of scholarly opinion as to the precise nature of Peking's objectives, and the relative importance that she attaches to each of them.

The following examples of expert opinion concerning the nature of China's foreign policy objectives and the means by which she endeavors to attain them amply illustrate this point.

Franz Michael, Director of the Sino-Soviet Institute at George Washington University:

(China's) new position as a nuclear power . . . has clearly played a part in Peking's decision to engage in more vigorous sponsorship and support of 'wars of national liberation' in Asia. The statements and agreements between Peking and her North Korean and Indo-Chinese allies underscore this point in advertising China's position as a 'reliable rear area' for such wars . . .

This enunciation of a policy of aggression makes it necessary to take new stock of Chinese aims, techniques and tactics. . . The clear intent of current Chinese policy is to promote, foster and support Communist revolution.³

Peter Van Ness, Associate Professor in the Graduate School of International Studies at the University of Denver, and Associate of the Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan:

. . . Chinese policy regarding revolutionary movements - as is clear from both public statements and twenty years of history - calls for revolutionaries to rely principally on their own efforts and resources to gain power. The most comprehensive articulation of this concept of self-reliance appears in Lin Piao's variously interpreted, 'Long Live the Victory of People's War!' . . . To quote Lin, 'Revolution, or people's war, in any country is the business of the masses in that country and should be carried out primarily by their own efforts; there is no other way.'⁴

Hans J. Morgenthau, Professor of Political Science and Modern History at the University of Chicago, and Senior Research Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations:

I think this (Lin Piao's, 'Long Live the

³Franz Michael, "A Design for Aggression," Problems of Communism, January-April, 1971, p. 65.

⁴Peter Van Ness, "Mao Tse-tung and Revolutionary Self-Reliance," Problems of Communism, January-April, 1971, pp. 71-73.

Victory of People's War') is merely rhetoric . . . It ought to be put in the wastebasket. The idea that you can apply the principles which have led to the Communization of China - conquering the rural areas, surrounding the cities, strangling the cities until they fall into your lap - to apply this concept to the rest of the world is, I think, sheer nonsense.⁵

Design of the Investigation

In order to establish the context within which China's decisions concerning the Bangla Desh crisis were made, the history of the PRC's relations with both Pakistan (Chapter II) and India (Chapter III) will be examined. Chapter IV will investigate the nature of Peking's support for "wars of national liberation" since 1949 in order to determine how this tactic has been employed by the Chinese in pursuit of their foreign policy goals in the past, and the relative importance which Peking attached to such support in 1971. In Chapter V, an analysis will be made of the PRC's actions during the crisis on the subcontinent from April to December, 1971.

Throughout the paper, research and analysis will be directed toward answering the following questions: Has the desire to instigate and support "wars of national liberation" served in an unvarying degree as a determinant of Peking's

⁵Hans J. Morgenthau, quoted in Frank N. Trager, "China (Is, Is Not) An Aggressive Power," New York Times Magazine, 13 March, 1966.

foreign policy since 1949? At the time of the conflict in East Pakistan, what was China's policy toward support of these revolutionary movements? Why did China opt for support of the military regime in West Pakistan rather than the revolutionary movement in East Bengal? What may China have perceived as the options open to her when the crisis in East Bengal erupted in April, and again when war broke out between India and Pakistan in December, 1971? What factors may she have considered as constituting constraints on her actions during these same two periods? And finally, how did China seek to fulfill its obligations to Pakistan during the war in December?

Reference Sources

I have relied primarily on translated articles from Red Flag, People's Daily and other Mainland Chinese periodicals which are published in Survey of the China Mainland Press and in English language editions of Peking Review for primary source material.

Few books concerning China's involvement in the most recent Indo-Pakistan war have yet been published. Most of the source material directly related to the events of this period, therefore, is in the form of articles written for professional journals or government agency periodicals. I have relied heavily on these, although I have also referred

to earlier works in order to develop the background of the situations and policies which led to China's actions during the period under study. The New York Times microfilm files for the period from March, 1971, to February, 1972, were also used extensively.

Abbreviations

Several abbreviations have been used through this paper. SCMP stands for Survey of China Mainland Press. This publication, together with Current Background (CB), is published by the American Consulate in Hong Kong, and consists of translated articles from the Chinese media. NCNA (New China News Agency) is the official news agency of Communist China. The designation PRC has generally been used in place of the longer "People's Republic of China".

CHAPTER II

SINO-PAKISTANI RELATIONS: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

At first glance, Pakistan would seem to be an improbable partner of the People's Republic of China. Capitalistic, ostensibly Western-oriented and guided by the principle of "religious nationalism", this Muslim nation appears to be the very antithesis of everything that a revolutionary communist state would seek in an ally. Yet China's relationship with Pakistan has been one of the few aspects of Pakistan's foreign relations that has shown some degree of stability. The recent conflict on the Indian subcontinent has once again brought this relationship into sharp focus. It is the purpose of this chapter, therefore, to examine briefly the history of Sino-Pakistani relations in order to put in perspective Peking's decision to back Islamabad during its most recent war with India.

SINO-PAKISTANI FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES

Before attempting to relate the background of the relationship between Pakistan and the PRC it first would be helpful to delineate those areas of national interest and foreign policy objectives which might tend to cause the policies of both countries to become convergent at a particular place or time.

China's Foreign Policy Objectives in Asia

The principal concern of China's foreign relations, like that of all other countries, is to safeguard her territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence. One of her primary foreign policy objectives, therefore, is to prevent the rise of any centers of power and influence on her periphery which might constitute a threat to her security. India fits into this category.

Another objective of Peking's foreign policy is to unify the country by recovering Taiwan. China has always regarded the United States forces on the island as occupation troops, and their presence on Chinese territory has contributed to Peking's desire since 1949 to eliminate, or at least reduce, the American military presence in Asia.¹

With the worsening of her dispute with the USSR, however, fear of encirclement by the Soviet Union seemed to replace China's fears of "containment" by the United States,² and it now seems probable that Peking would be willing to accept a limited American military presence in Asia as a counter to the growth of Soviet influence. It is the increasing Soviet influence in India, with its implications for China's

¹Shivaji Ganguly, Pakistan-China Relations: A Study in Interaction (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1972), pp. 7-8.

²Peking Review, No. 24, 9 June 1962, p. 32.

security that has largely shaped the PAC's policies toward the subcontinent since the early 1960's.

Pakistan's Foreign Policy Objectives

From an initial policy of non-alignment, Pakistan shifted during the early and mid-1950's to a fully pro-Western stance.³ Beginning in the early 1960's, however, increasing United States and Soviet assistance to India led Pakistan to de-emphasize her relations with the West and to seek a closer relationship with the PRC.⁴

At times, suspicion and distrust of Soviet intentions in South Asia have contributed significantly to the various orientations of Pakistan's foreign policy. This was especially true during the late 1950's when the Soviet Union began to train and equip the Afghan armed forces, and backed Afghanistan in a dispute with Pakistan involving control of the Pathan minority in the Afghan-Pakistan border region.⁵

The major determinant in the formulation of Pakistan's foreign policy, however, has been the desire to counter the perceived threat to her security posed by India. Within the

³Ian Stephens, Pakistan (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1963), p. 219.

⁴Lawrence Ziring, The Ayub Khan Era (Syracuse: The Syracuse University Press, 1971), p. 46.

⁵Donald N. Wilbur, Pakistan (New Haven: Hearst Press, 1964), p. 312.

context of Indo-Pakistan relations the major cause of tension has been the continuing dispute over the predominantly Muslim state of Jammu and Kashmir. These two objectives - to defend herself against India, and the desire to acquire Kashmir - have been the principal concerns of Pakistan throughout her national existence.⁶

THE EVOLUTION OF SINO-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

Having defined the relevant Sino-Pakistani foreign policy objectives which have led to interaction between the two countries, it would now be appropriate to review the history of relations between Pakistan and Peking. By observing how each country sought to achieve its objectives, we may be better able to understand how the relationship between them evolved to the point of a de facto anti-Indian alliance during the Indo-Pakistani war of 1971.

The first phase of Sino-Pakistani relations can be said to date from the recognition of Peking by Pakistan in 1950 and end with the passing of the Bandung era in 1957. The next period began in 1958 and continued through the Sino-Indian border war of late 1962. The last phase began with the move toward closer relations between China and Pakistan.

⁶Mohammad Ayub Khan, Pakistan Perspective (Washington: Embassy of Pakistan, 1965), pp. 29-33.

in 1963 and extended up to the eve of the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971.

1950-1957

During the first years after it attained independence in 1947, Pakistan was preoccupied with settling its own house in order and had no interest in becoming involved in the Cold War. It held no illusions as to its ability to play a role of any consequence in global disputes, and since it perceived no threat from either East or West, it saw no reason to align itself with either bloc.⁷

After the Communists came to power in Peking, Pakistan recognized the new regime almost simultaneously with India in January, 1950. However, the Karachi Government waited a year and a half before it dispatched an ambassador to Peking. This delay seemed to exemplify Pakistan's ambivalence toward the PRC during this early period. For example, she was quick to recognize the Communist regime, but in the United Nations she followed the US lead and voted against discussion of the question of China's representation. She also continued to maintain unofficial, but offensive (in Peking's view), contacts with the Chiang Kai-shek Government on Taiwan.⁸

⁷William J. Barnds, India, Pakistan and the Great Powers (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), p. 79.

⁸Neville Maxwell, India's China War (New Delhi: Jaico, 1971), p. 274.

After the invasion of South Korea by the North in June, 1950, Pakistan supported the United Nations intervention and voted to declare North Korea an aggressor. When Chinese troops entered the war, however, she became more cautious, and was opposed both to branding China an aggressor and to imposing an embargo on trade with the Communist mainland.

With the end of the Korean War, however, and the gradual extension of the Cold War into Asia, Pakistan opted for joining the Western alliance system. Distrust of the growing Soviet influence in India and Afghanistan, and apprehension caused by the warming trend evident in Sino-Indian relations after the Korean War probably contributed in large part to Pakistan's joining SEATO in 1954, and CENTO in 1955.

Although Pakistan's Western orientation in the early and mid-1950's might have been viewed by Peking as inimical to Chinese interests, the PRC appeared to regard Karachi's maneuvering, if not with complete equanimity, at least with understanding of Pakistan's position and motivation. At the Bandung Conference in April, 1955, Chou En-lai referred to a conversation that he had had with the Pakistani Prime Minister, saying:

He told me that although Pakistan was a party to a military treaty, Pakistan was not against China. Pakistan had no fear China would commit aggression against her. As a result of that, we

achieved a mutual understanding, although we are still against military treaties.⁹

An "era of good-feeling" between the Asian neutrals and the communist nations had spread throughout Asia with the end of the tensions created by the Korean War. The Bandung Conference marked the high-point of this period. Sino-Indian relations flourished in the spirit of Panch Sheel - the five Principles of Coexistence. In late 1956, the Prime Ministers of China and Pakistan exchanged visits, establishing a new level of cordiality between the two nations.

By the end of 1957, however, Chinese policies both at home and abroad had shifted markedly toward a harder and more militant line, and on the subcontinent a significant realignment of forces began to take shape.

1958-1962

Sino-Pakistani relations during this period must be viewed in the context of important events taking place at that time, both on the subcontinent and elsewhere. One major event - the initiation in late 1954 and 1955 of large scale Soviet economic aid to India - seems to have marked a change. Moscow's assistance coincided with U.S. efforts to expedite Indian economic development, and it probably appeared to observers in Peking that India was dropping her previous policy

⁹George McT. Kahin, The Afro-Asian Conference, Bandung, Indonesia, April, 1955 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956), p. 57.

of non-alignment in favor of "double alignment" with both the U.S. and the Soviet Union. A Soviet aid policy which was apparently aimed at building up "non-aligned" India at the expense of socialist China caused understandable resentment in Peking, and led to suspicion of Moscow's intentions in South Asia.¹⁰ This suspicion, together with the tension generated by the growing Sino-Indian border dispute, combined to bring about a dramatic volte face in Peking's relations with India by late 1959.

At the same time, many Pakistanis were becoming disillusioned with the American policy of aid to India which seemed to emphasize massive economic, military and political assistance for New Delhi at the expense of Pakistan. Even so, General Ayub Khan, who took power by a coup d'etat in October, 1958, continued initially to hew to the foreign policy line established by his predecessor. In 1959, he went so far as to call for a joint defense with India of the subcontinent, citing as justification the "inexorable push of the north in the direction of the warm waters of the Indian Ocean."¹¹ The proposal would have had the effect of releasing both armies from their confrontation along the Indo-Pakistan border, thus permitting them to

¹⁰Harold C. Hinton, Communist China in World Politics (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), p. 449.

¹¹Kahn, Pakistan Perspective, p. 15.

concentrate on the defense of their respective northern borders against China and the Soviet Union. Since the Chinese military threat to the subcontinent, real or perceived, was more serious than the Soviet threat, the practical effect of such an agreement would have been to deploy the Indian army primarily against the PRC instead of against Pakistan.¹²

After India rejected the proposed defense pact, Pakistan began to fear that trouble might develop along the disputed 200-mile Sino-Pakistan border in the Hunza region of Azad (Pakistani controlled) Kashmir - a fear prompted, perhaps, by a July editorial in People's Daily, which warned that:

The Pakistani ruling clique has been playing a vicious role and adopting an extremely unfriendly attitude towards China. The Pakistan Government should pull up the horse before the precipice, reverse its hostile stand towards the Chinese people, and return to the road laid down by the Bandung resolution and the road to Sino-Pakistani friendship.¹³

Since Pakistan felt that a border settlement would be both valuable in its own right, and also an excellent way to initiate a rapprochement with the PRC, it informally sounded out Peking regarding border talks in October, 1959. Peking did not reply until January, 1961, when it accepted the offer.

¹²Hinton, Communist China, p. 454.

¹³People's Daily, 23 July, 1959, cited in Maxwell, India's China War, p. 274.

Not until May, 1962, however, did the two sides begin serious discussions on the border issue.¹⁴

Meanwhile, Sino-Indian border tensions continued to intensify, and relations between the two countries deteriorated steadily. The outbreak of hostilities in the fall of 1962 and the decisive defeat of the Indian army stunned the West, and prompted a massive program of arms aid to India.

This Indian defense build-up after the war foreshadowed for Pakistan a seriously adverse shift in the balance of power on the subcontinent, and caused her gradually to alter the orientation of her foreign policy. Although she remained formally (though unenthusiastically) aligned with the West, Pakistan began actively to seek a closer relationship with the PRC.¹⁵

Peking undoubtedly viewed the opportunity to take advantage both of the Indo-Pakistani rivalry and of Pakistan's estrangement from the Western alliance as an application of the principle which states that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend".

¹⁴Alastair Lamb, The Kashmir Problem (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1968), p. 99.

¹⁵George J. Lerski, "The Pakistan-American Alliance: A Reevaluation of the Past Decade," Asian Survey, Vol. VIII, No. 5 (May, 1968), 410.

A Sino-Pakistani border agreement was finally concluded in March, 1963 - a little more than three months after the Sino-Indian cease-fire. In signing the treaty, however, Peking retained a degree of flexibility vis-a-vis both India and Pakistan. Since Pakistan's "border" with China was created only by virtue of Pakistan's occupation of part of Kashmir in 1947, there is a real question as to whether or not a Sino-Pakistani border legally exists. India's position, of course, is that it does not. For this reason, apparently, the PRC refused to endorse Pakistan's claim to that part of Jammu and Kashmir State which it controlled, and stipulated that the Sino-Pakistani border agreement would not be ratified until a final resolution of both Indian and Pakistani claims to the area had been made.¹⁶

1963-1971

The end of the Sino-Indian border war in 1962 marked the advent of a new phase in relations between China and Pakistan. On China's part, she viewed Pakistan as a counterweight to India along the Himalayan frontier and throughout the subcontinent, and as a possible link to the Afro-Asian world for whose allegiance and support she was competing with the Soviet Union.¹⁷

¹⁶Ganguly, Pakistan-China Relations, p. 18.

¹⁷Hoover Institution, Communist China and Arms Control (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), p. 91.

In 1963, Pakistan supported a resolution in the United Nations calling for the admission of the PRC, and concurrently, began to support Peking's position on Taiwan. This prompted Peking to endorse fully Pakistan's Kashmir stand.¹⁸ By this time, the Pakistani fears of China that had contributed to Ayub Khan's desire to establish a joint defense pact with India had been dispelled. The restraint demonstrated by the Chinese during their war with India convinced the Pakistani leaders that Peking's aims had been limited essentially to resolution of the border problem.¹⁹

During 1964 and 1965 there was a proliferation of contacts and activities between the two countries. An airline agreement was signed. Frequent visits by high-ranking Chinese and Pakistani officials were supplemented by the exchange of numerous trade missions and cultural organizations. In 1964, Peking extended a \$60 million credit to Pakistan for the purchase of Chinese goods.

Meanwhile, Indian apprehensions over the possibility of a military alliance between Pakistan and the PRC were

¹⁸Ganguly, Pakistan-China Relations, p. 21.

¹⁹Barnds, Great Powers, p. 186.

fanned by Pakistani officials. Speaking in the National Assembly in July, 1963, Pakistani Foreign Minister Bhutto said:

Any attack by India on Pakistan would no longer confine the stakes to the independence and territorial integrity of Pakistan. An attack by India on Pakistan would also involve the security and territorial integrity of the largest state in Asia.²⁰

It seems unlikely, though, that at this time there existed anything more between the two countries than a mutual understanding to keep in close contact regarding developments on the subcontinent.

In March, 1965, President Ayub Khan visited Peking and was enthusiastically welcomed. The joint statements which were issued at the conclusion of the talks covered topics ranging from nuclear weapons to colonialism and Afro-Asian solidarity. Indian attention, however, was focused on the statement concerning Kashmir:

. . . the two parties noted with concern that the Kashmir dispute remains unsolved, and consider its continued existence a threat to peace and security in the region.

This, of course, did nothing to dispel New Delhi's growing apprehension concerning the possibility of joint Sino-Pakistani military action against her. Indeed, the Peking communique

²⁰G. P. Seth, "China As a Factor in Indo-Pakistani Politics," The World Today, Vol. 25, No. 1 (January, 1969), 43.

brought forth strong protests against "Sino-Pakistani collusion in Kashmir".²¹

Pakistan's policy of increasing its ties with Peking while pressuring New Delhi over Kashmir created both an increasingly tense situation on the subcontinent, and a policy dilemma for Moscow as well. Since 1955, the USSR had consistently maintained a pro-Indian stance in every Indo-Pakistani quarrel. But with China's expanding role in Pakistan, the Soviet Union felt compelled to counter Peking's influence, or else risk forfeiting by default all leverage she might possess with Rawalpindi. As a result, when fighting broke out in April, 1965, between Indian and Pakistani forces in the disputed Rann of Kutch, the USSR opted for a neutral stance.

Moscow's desire for closer ties with Pakistan coincided with a reciprocal desire on the part of officials in Rawalpindi. Pakistan's aims were threefold: to keep Moscow neutral in Indo-Pakistani disputes; to obtain Soviet arms so that she would not be entirely dependent for military equipment on either the U.S. or China; and to bring about a reduction in Soviet arms shipments to India. Of these three goals, Pakistan was most successful in achieving the first,

²¹Lamb, The Kashmir Problem, p. 114.

for when a Pakistani initiated guerrilla attack in Kashmir erupted into full scale conflict in August, Moscow maintained her position of neutrality and refused to place responsibility for the outbreak of war. (Pakistan's success in achieving the other two objectives ranged from "some" in the second instance, to "nil" in the third.)²²

As the fighting progressed, China pledged full support for Pakistan, and accused India of "criminal aggression". On 16 September, Peking accused India of crossing the Chinese frontier from Sikkim, and erecting fortifications on Chinese territory. An ultimatum was sent to New Delhi demanding withdrawal within three days and threatening "grave consequences" if it were not met. Before the ultimatum expired, however, the Chinese extended it another three days - suggesting, perhaps, that Peking's willingness to fight another border war with a vastly improved Indian army might not be as great as she would like it to appear. The ultimatum was withdrawn altogether after it appeared certain that both India and Pakistan would agree to a cease-fire demanded by the United Nations Security Council.²³

Although Peking had made no direct military inter-

²²William J. Barnds, "Moscow and South Asia," Problems of Communism, May-June, 1972, p. 19.

²³Lamb, The Kashmir Problem, p. 129.

vention, its contribution to the Pakistani war effort had been substantial. The Chinese threats had greatly alarmed New Delhi, and had probably tied down large numbers of troops. Even more important in the eyes of Pakistani leaders was the fact that Peking's support enabled Ayub Khan to agree to a cease-fire from what he could describe to the Pakistani population as a position of strength. (Pakistan's military situation at the end of hostilities might better be described as a stalemate which, if anything, favored the disposition of the Indian forces.)

The actual degree of cooperation between Pakistan and Peking is unknown. It almost certainly was a great deal less than the more extreme Indian claims of a totally coordinated effort, orchestrated and directed by Peking - would have one believe. Nevertheless, the Chinese and Pakistani Foreign Ministers held discussions in Karachi on 4 September, and it is likely that some form of coordination and contingency planning took place at that time.²⁴ But regardless of the degree to which their actions were coordinated, the very act of declaring its support for Pakistan at the time of the initial clashes in the Rann of Kutch clearly constituted a milestone in Peking's policies toward South Asia. This was the first time that the PRC had openly sided with either India or

²⁴Ibid., p. 130.

Pakistan in a dispute between the two countries. By her decision to intervene, she had at one stroke cemented her relations with Rawalpindi, ensured the continuing enmity of New Delhi and implicitly declared her willingness to "up the ante" in competition with Moscow for influence in Pakistan.

Peking's relationship with Pakistan grew steadily closer during the fall of 1965 and into 1966. Although China bitterly assailed the Soviet-sponsored Tashkent Conference which formally ended the 1965 war, she did not attack Pakistan for attending. Neither did she criticize Pakistan for seeking to improve relations with the USSR, nor for maintaining her alliance with the United States.²⁵

In March, 1966, China's President, Liu Shao-chi, and Foreign Minister Chen Yi paid a State visit to Pakistan and were accorded a lavish welcome. It seems quite probable that economic and military assistance and trade figured importantly in the subsequent discussions between the leaders of the two nations. Arms aid from the U.S. had been restricted since the 1965 war with India to "non-lethal" equipment and spare parts, and Moscow seemed reluctant to provide more than token military assistance - no doubt out of deference to Indian sensibilities. Pakistan, therefore, desperately

²⁵Bhabani Sen Gupta, "A Maoist Line for India," China Quarterly, No. 23 (January-March, 1968), 7.

needed a reliable source of arms, and China was apparently willing to provide them - in addition to increasing both its trade and economic assistance.²⁶ Pakistan's trade with the PRC rose to \$68 million in 1967 - up from \$13.5 million in 1961. In June, China agreed to supply machinery for a heavy industrial complex. A maritime agreement was negotiated in October. The next few years saw a growing number of Chinese-assisted projects begin operation.²⁷

In retrospect, one of the most portentous aspects of the Chinese visit in March, 1966, seems to have been largely overlooked by Western observers. Speaking at an official reception in Dacca, Chen Yi declared:

In the future, should East Pakistan or West Pakistan again face the armed attack of any aggressor, the Chinese Government and people will continue to support them in their struggle for self-determination.²⁸

The possibility that these issues of "aggression" and "self-determination" might create a dilemma for Chinese foreign

²⁶U.S. arms aid to both India and Pakistan following the 1965 war totalled \$70 million - and this in the form of spare parts and "non-lethal" equipment. At the same time, Soviet military assistance to India alone amounted to \$730 million. PRC arms aid to Pakistan during this same period totalled \$143 million. New York Times, 10 February, 1972.

²⁷Barnds, Great Powers, p. 214.

²⁸Peking Review, No. 14, 1 April, 1966, p. 7.

policy in that very region only five years later most likely never occurred to the PRC's Foreign Minister.

After mid-1966, the Cultural Revolution caused China's attention to turn inward. For a while, the PRC's interest in its relations with Pakistan declined. The continued importance of the relationship to Peking, however, is indicated by the fact that even at the height of the turmoil within China, the government in Rawalpindi was never singled-out for the kind of vituperation to which all other Asian nations were subjected. Even so, the excesses of the Cultural Revolution probably raised doubts in Pakistan concerning China's stability and her reliability as an ally. Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Bhutto, had always been a strong proponent of close ties with the PRC, and William J. Barnds, in his book, India, Pakistan and The Great Powers, posits that Ayub Khan's dismissal of him in 1966, although rooted in domestic politics, nevertheless provided an indication that Pakistan's enthusiasm for her relationship with Peking had waned somewhat, and henceforth would be kept in perspective.²⁹

Perhaps because she sensed a cooling of the Pakistani attitude, China's fears of an Indo-Pakistani rapprochement grew stronger. She seemed convinced that the United States

²⁹Barnds, Great Powers, p. 215.

and the Soviet Union were collaborating to "coax and coerce Pakistan into abandoning its independent foreign policy and allying itself with the Indian reactionaries against India".³⁰

Peking's belief that the superpowers were colluding in a plan to contain her was reinforced in June, 1969, when Leonid Brezhnev proposed that the Asian countries form a collective security system. In China's view, there was no doubt that this alliance would be directed against her, and her reaction was sharp. The proposal was rejected by both India and Pakistan, however, as neither was willing to enter into an anti-Chinese pact.³¹

With the end of the Cultural Revolution, Sino-Pakistani relations once again improved, and the years just prior to the East Bengal crisis of 1971 saw increasing Sino-Pakistani interaction and cooperation. A jointly built, all-weather road from China's Sinkiang Province through Azad Kashmir to Karachi was opened in February, 1971.³² Pakistan provides port facilities at Karachi for Chinese goods shipped overland by this route from Sinkiang and

³⁰Peking Review, No. 24, 9 June, 1967, p. 32.

³¹Hemen Ray, "Soviet Diplomacy in Asia," Problems of Communism, March-April, 1970, p. 48.

³²New York Times, 1 December, 1971.

destined for Africa and the Middle East.³³

The level of Chinese economic aid to Pakistan continued to grow, with \$200 million in economic assistance being promised in 1970.³⁴

The dominant factors influencing the Sino-Pakistani relationship in 1971, however, continued to be Pakistan's desire to counterbalance the Indian threat, and Peking's fear of containment by a U.S.-Soviet anti-Chinese alliance centered on India.

SUMMARY

Before proceeding to an examination of Sino-Indian relations, it might be well to review the highlights of Peking's relationship with Pakistan. In doing so, we may discern how PRC and Pakistani perceptions of the evolving situation on the subcontinent led to a de facto anti-Indian alliance between the two countries in 1971.

The period from 1949, when the Communists came to power in China, until 1957 was one of minimal interaction

³³George E. Taylor, "China's New Diplomacy - A Symposium," Problems of Communism, January-February, 1972, p. 60.

³⁴Barnds, Great Powers, p. 240.

between the two governments. Although this was the period of greatest Pakistani involvement in the Western alliance system, relations between Peking and Karachi remained proper, if not always completely cordial. India remained non-aligned, and thus was not perceived by the PRC as a threat to her security. On the other hand, although she remained apprehensive about India's ultimate ambitions on the subcontinent, Pakistan felt secure in her alliances with the U.S.

During the period from 1958 until 1962, however, Peking became convinced that the U.S. and the Soviet Union were collaborating with India in a plot to contain her. Massive Soviet and American military assistance to New Delhi following the Sino-Indian war in 1962 served to further confirm this suspicion in Chinese minds.

The 1962 Sino-Indian war, however, also worked to strengthen a growing feeling in both Pakistan and China that their interests on the subcontinent would best be served by the establishment of a firmer relationship between the two capitals. Except for a brief interregnum during the Cultural Revolution when relations between Peking and Rawalpindi cooled somewhat, the period from 1963 until 1971 saw a steadily increasing interdependence between Chinese and Pakistani policies in South Asia.

In 1963, Pakistan and Peking concluded a border

settlement. In that year, also, Pakistan supported a resolution in the United Nations calling for membership for the PRC. This prompted a Chinese declaration of full support for Pakistan's Kashmir stand. In 1965, Peking openly declared her support for the Rawalpindi Government at the outset of hostilities between Pakistan and India. This move cemented Sino-Pakistani friendship, but at the same time, it further exacerbated the state of mutual hostility which already existed between Peking and New Delhi.

From 1965 on, one of the driving forces behind PRC's attitude toward the subcontinent was a fear that Pakistan might eventually resolve her differences with India and join with New Delhi in an anti-Chinese pact of some sort.³⁵

On the other hand, Pakistan's primary concern continued to be with what she perceived to be a desire on the part of India to prevent her from becoming a rival center of power on the subcontinent.

Thus, Pakistani and Chinese perceptions of the situation in South Asia differ, and their foreign policies relative to the area are derived from different contexts. Yet India constitutes a major point of convergence in the foreign

³⁵Peking Review, No. 24, 9 June, 1967, p. 32.

policy formulation of each nation. This fact set the stage for a new war on the subcontinent in 1971, and the dilemma which that conflict posed for Chinese decision makers.

CHAPTER III

SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS SINCE 1949

It would be practically impossible to view China's role in the East Bengal crisis in the proper perspective without first having an understanding of the past nature of the Sino-Indian relationship. The underlying causes of the feelings of suspicion and distrust which exist between the two countries are deeply rooted, and cannot be disregarded in any analysis of China's policies toward South Asia.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, will be to review briefly the history of relations between India and China since 1949, in order to understand more fully the nature of the relationship at the time of the outbreak of the East Bengal crisis in March, 1971. Certain factors affecting the Sino-Indian relationship appear to be more significant than others, and will be discussed in some detail. These are: (1) the Sino-Indian border dispute; (2) Indo-Soviet relations; and, (3) the activities of the Communist Party of India (CPI).

SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS: AN OVERVIEW

Even though India, in January, 1949, was the second

country to recognize Peking, relations between the two Asian giants were initially clouded by the PRC's suspicion that New Delhi was an anti-revolutionary pawn of U.S. "imperialism." Her antipathy was reinforced by India's encouragement of Tibetan separatism, which evoked Chinese charges that India was interfering in China's internal affairs.¹

During the early 1950's, however, Peking began a gradual shift away from the policy of inciting "armed struggle" and revolution which had marked her earlier relations with her Asian neighbors, and toward a policy of cultivating Asian neutrals and allies of the United States through an appeal for "peaceful coexistence".

India appeared to become the key country in the implementation of the PRC's new strategy. Nehru's steadfast adherence to non-alignment, his friendship for China and his efforts to achieve a ceasefire in Korea had all contributed to a realization in Peking that India's general foreign policy line was favorable to Chinese interests. Accordingly, diplomatic efforts to cultivate Indian good will began as early as 1951.² In an agreement in April, 1954, India renounced

¹C. N. Satyapalan, "The Sino-Indian Border Conflict," Orbis, VIII, No. 2 (Summer, 1964), 375.

²Harold C. Hinton, China's Turbulent Quest (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1970), p. 74.

its special rights in Tibet and recognized Chinese suzerainty over the region. In addition, both sides pledged to maintain friendly relations and to not interfere in one another's internal affairs. Thus, Peking's new policy of "peaceful coexistence" passed from the informal to the formal stage.³

The Afro-Asian Conference held at Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955, marked the peak of Sino-Indian friendship. Despite some feeling that India's attitude toward her was tinged with condescension, and not a little arrogance, Peking nonetheless fully appreciated the support that she derived from New Dehli's neutral stance in world politics. Nehru kept his distance from the Western bloc, and denounced their "aggressions" in the Suez war of 1956 and the American intervention in Lebanon in 1958. He consistently pressed for China's admission to the U.N., and was, as People's Daily described him, "a friend to China and an opponent to the imperialist policy of war and aggression".⁴

But by the late 1950's, Sino-Indian relations had begun to deteriorate rapidly. China's continued issuance of

³George N. Patterson, Peking Versus Delhi (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1964), p. 121.

⁴Peking Review, 5 December, 1959, cited in Neville Maxwell, India's China War (Bombay: Jaico, 1971), p. 262.

maps showing disputed areas of the Aksai Chin and North-east Frontier Agency as part of China exacerbated the border dispute which, until then, had been ignored by both countries in the interest of mutual friendship. But the focus of Sino-Indian relations was soon diverted from the worsening border problem by events in Tibet. By early 1959, Chinese manipulation of the Tibetan political system had led to widespread unrest. When fighting broke out in Lhasa in March, China's reaction was swift. Large numbers of troops were rushed in and the revolt was crushed. In the process, however, thousands of Tibetan refugees - and the Dalai Lama - fled across the border into India. Peking was furious and was convinced that India was guilty of duplicity - a conviction that was no doubt reinforced when the Indian government failed to keep the assurances which it gave Peking that the Dalai Lama would be prohibited from engaging in political activity while in India. The Chinese embassy in New Delhi went so far as to charge that the rebellion had been engineered from the Indian side of the border.⁵

In April, 1960, Nehru agreed to meet with Chou En-lai in New Delhi to discuss the border issue, but the talks ended in failure, and marked the last serious search for agreement

⁵William J. Barnds, India, Pakistan and the Great Powers (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), pp. 144-146.

by either side. Tensions increased throughout the next two years until, in the fall of 1962, open warfare broke out along the McMahon Line in the east, and in the wastes of the Ladakh region in the west. India's defeat was complete and stunning, and resulted in a general hardening of Indian attitudes toward the PRC. Nehru called China "a country with profound inimical intentions toward our independence and institutions."⁶

Indian foreign policy now became actively anti-Chinese. Although continuing to support - if somewhat unenthusiastically - Peking's admission to the U.N., New Delhi began openly to oppose China in many Afro-Asian and other world forums.⁷

The Chinese defeat of the Indian army had another far-reaching effect. Following the war, both the U.S. and the Soviet Union quickly initiated massive military assistance programs designed to stabilize the balance of power in South Asia. The resulting buildup of the Indian armed forces deeply alarmed Pakistan, which now sought even closer ties with China in an effort to counterbalance the threat

⁶Jawaharlal Nehru, "Changing India," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 41, No. 3 (April, 1963), 458.

⁷Barnds, Great Powers, p. 181.

from India. This set the stage for the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir war of 1965, and further Sino-Indian confrontation.

Ayub Khan's policy of "leaning on India", which he had followed in an attempt to gain concessions on the Kashmir issue, led to warfare along the 1947 cease-fire line in August, 1965. The Tashkent agreement in January of 1966 formally ended hostilities and restored the military status quo ante, but China's declaration of support for Pakistan and the implied threats of Chinese intervention had qualitatively altered the politics of the subcontinent. For the first time, the PRC had openly sided with Pakistan in a conflict with India, and in doing so had not only caused a hardening of New Delhi's attitude toward Peking, but also had further widened the growing rift between herself and the Soviet Union. U.S. and Soviet warnings against Chinese intervention had prompted a furious reply by Peking, charging the two super-powers with collusion in their support of India and in their opposition to China.⁸

China's suspicion of India's relations with Moscow grew through 1965 and 1966 with the escalation of the Vietnam war. The Indian Government was suspected of acting as

⁸Peking Review, No. 46, 12 November, 1965, p. 14.

an agent of the USSR in putting forth peace proposals. Peking believed that she was witnessing an "eastward shift of the U.S. global strategy" with active Soviet connivance, in which New Dehli was playing an increasingly prominent role.⁹

With the coming of the Cultural Revolution, China's criticism took on a more revolutionary tone. India was viewed by Peking Radio as the weakest link in the U.S.-Soviet scheme to encircle China - beset by economic crisis, and torn by "peasant struggles" against the government's "reactionary rule."¹⁰ Peking thus moved to take advantage of what she perceived was New Delhi's weakening control by showing increasing interest in the "national self-determination struggles" in Kashmir, and in sovereignty and independence for Sikkim and Bhutan.¹¹

In August, 1968, and again in January, 1969, Prime Minister Gandhi made overtures to Peking concerning a normalization of relations. The PRC was still preoccupied with the Cultural Revolution, however, and ignored the Indian

⁹Peking Review, No. 10, 4 March, 1966, p. 3.

¹⁰Bhabani Sen Gupta, "A Maoist Line for India," China Quarterly, No. 33 (January-March, 1968), 9.

¹¹Ibid, p. 3.

signals.¹² By 1970, though, a degree of normalcy had returned to the conduct of China's foreign policy, and Sino-Indian relations had improved to the point where New Delhi had decided to replace her ambassador in Peking for the first time since the 1962 border war.¹³

THE SINO-INDIAN BORDER DISPUTE

The boundary dispute between China and India has probably played a greater part in shaping their relationship than any other single factor. Each side has, at various times, shifted its position between a desire for peaceful resolution of the issue to one of open hostility and attempts to secure its claims by force of arms, and it can be safely said that at any given time China's attitude toward India (and vice versa) has depended largely on the amount of importance that Peking attached to the unresolved problem of their disputed mutual borders. For this reason, a knowledge of the evolution of the boundary dispute through 1970 is important to an understanding of Sino-Indian relations in March, 1971.

Until the late 1950's, the Sino-Indian border was

¹²William J. Barnds, "Moscow and South Asia," Problems of Communism, May-June, 1972, p. 22.

¹³Interview with U.S. State Dept. official, New Delhi, March, 1972.

not an issue in relations between the two countries. It was not until India discovered a newly constructed Chinese road across the disputed northeast portion of Kashmir in 1958, and an armed clash occurred at Longju in the North-east Frontier Agency (NEFA) in August, 1959, that the quiet-cent border dispute flared into the open and ended the "era of peaceful coexistence."

Aksai Chin

During the Chinese conquest of Tibet in 1951, a Chinese army from Sinkiang crossed into western Tibet through the disputed Aksai Chin territory of Ladakh in northeastern Kashmir. The Chinese discovered that this route provided the most favorable land line of communications between Central Asia and the Tibetan plateau, and decided to build a road. Work was begun in 1952 and was completed by 1956.¹⁴ Although considerable doubt exists as to the exact location of the Indian border in Ladakh, the Indians claim that for a considerable distance the road trespasses on their territory. Much evidence exists, however, that the route chosen by the PRC runs entirely through territory which might legitimately be regarded as Chinese.¹⁵

¹⁴Alastair Lamb, The Kashmir Problem (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1968), p. 92.

¹⁵See Alastair Lamb, The China-India Border (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), Chapters 6 and 7.

By 1959, China had constructed another road to the south of the first. Both roads took on strategic importance to Peking, with its need to be able to shift troops to Tibet, if required, at any time of the year. This importance was emphasized when the internal political situation in Tibet worsened to the point of open rebellion in March of that year.

On the other hand, the Aksai Chin was of no strategic value to India - unless its purpose was to weaken the Chinese position in Tibet. Politically, however, New Delhi could not afford to acknowledge Peking's claim to the region. To do so could be interpreted by Pakistan as an Indian cession of Kashmir territory, and might lead to a Pakistani claim that if India could surrender part of Kashmir to China, she could make similar concessions to Pakistan.¹⁶

McMahon Line

The dispute in the eastern sector hinges on the fact that India claims that the boundary is the McMahon Line, which generally follows the crestline of the Himalayas. This line was established by a secret agreement between the British and the Tibetans in 1914. China claims that the boundary runs along the foot of the Himalayas, thus

¹⁶Lamb, The Kashmir Problem, p. 96.

creating a disputed area of approximately 38,000 square miles.

During the summer and fall of 1959, Indian forces probed across the McMahon Line, setting up outposts on the Chinese side of the border. The posts themselves had no military value, and apart from protesting to New Delhi, the Chinese left them alone. Nehru now made his position on the boundary dispute quite clear to Peking. India would not negotiate a general border settlement, but only minor adjustments in the McMahon Line - which she had already altered unilaterally, and in her favor. Even this small concession was contingent upon a complete Chinese withdrawal from the Aksai Chin.¹⁷

The Road to War

Serious clashes in both the eastern and western sectors accentuated the tension along the border in the summer and fall of 1959, but the Chinese were apparently still more willing to negotiate than to fight. In April, 1960, Chou met with Nehru in an attempt to reach a mutually agreeable solution. At a press conference before leaving New Delhi, Chou outlined the PRC's proposal, which India had refused. China considered the "so-called McMahon Line" to be completely unacceptable, but would, nonetheless, be willing "to accommodate the Indian point of view in the eastern

¹⁷Maxwell, India's China War, p. 268.

sector" if India would "accommodate China in the western sector." China would thus be giving up her claim to 38,000 square miles of the NEFA, while India would yield the 10,000 square miles of uninhabitable territory she claimed in Ladakh. More importantly, the strategic interests of each side would be preserved. India would have clear title up to the crestline of the Himalayas, and China would have the Aksai Chin.

India's refusal of Peking's proposal must have puzzled the Chinese, and increased their suspicions of New Delhi's intentions. According to Barnds, however, India's position seemed equally as reasonable to her:

India considered it had a good title to both the NEFA and Aksai Chin, and was not prepared to sacrifice either, particularly to a country that had, it felt, betrayed its trust and friendship. India had no interest in accommodating China's strategic needs, since Chinese military power was there either to suppress the Tibetans or to threaten India.¹⁸

The failure of the Chou-Nehru talks ended any serious search for agreement, and made it practically certain that no solution to the problem would be found short of war.

By mid-1960 India had instituted what she termed a

¹⁸Barnds, Great Powers, p. 154.

"Forward Policy" in the Ladakh sector. This was a plan to penetrate the gaps between Chinese positions in the disputed area and establish outposts in the Chinese rear. The objective was to block potential lines of further Chinese advance, establish a credible Indian presence in Aksai Chin, and threaten Chinese supply lines - thereby forcing the Chinese outposts to withdraw.¹⁹ But in point of fact, the forward movement of Indian troops through 1961 and into 1962 had the effect of backing the Chinese into a corner, and forcing them to choose between losing territory which they considered to be vital to their interests in Tibet and Sinkiang, or responding with force.

In September and October, the Chinese army conducted a swift, well-coordinated and decisive campaign against the Indian positions in both the east and west. As soon as they had achieved their limited objectives, however, Chinese forces were withdrawn. By the end of 1962, the only advanced Chinese outposts were in the desolate Ladakh region - probably as a defense measure against any future attempt by India to reinstitute its "forward policy".²⁰

Thus, at one stroke China had restored the status

¹⁹Maxwell, India's China War, p. 174.

²⁰Lamb, The Kashmir Problem, p. 103.

quo in the Aksai Chin, which Indian encroachment since 1960 had undermined; reopened Chinese claims south of the McMahon Line in the Assam Himalayas, which the Indians had ignored since 1959; and re-emphasized Peking's determined stand on the border issue.²¹

1963-1970: A Tenuous Status Quo

During the eight and a half year period between the 1962 war and the East Pakistan crisis in 1971, neither side pressed its claim to the disputed border regions too strongly, and both sides - at different times - offered to settle the problem through bilateral negotiations.

By the fall of 1964, the PRC seemed to have somewhat relaxed its attitude toward India, for in October, China offered to discuss a settlement of the border with New Delhi. The Indians, however, refused, and with the onset of hostilities between India and Pakistan in 1965, Sino-Indian relations once again deteriorated.

The disputed border did not play a significant role in China's involvement in the Indo-Pakistan war in Kashmir. Alleged intrusions by Indian troops across the Tibet-Sikkim border did, however, provide the pretext for Peking's

²¹Satyapalan, "The Sino-Indian Border Conflict," p. 389.

ultimatum to New Delhi and her threat of direct intervention on the side of Pakistan.

After both India and Pakistan had agreed to a conference at Tashkent to negotiate an end to the war, Chinese troops began to patrol aggressively along the NEFA and Tibet-Sikkim borders. Sino-Indian tensions rose sharply, and several clashes occurred. It was feared that China was trying to torpedo the Tashkent conference. The clashes soon ended, however, and the conference took place in January, 1966, as scheduled.²²

It is interesting to speculate as to why China chose the Tibet-Sikkim border area as the location for the greater part of her confrontation with India during this period. This segment of the Sino-Indian border was settled by a treaty between China and the British in 1890, and is one of the few boundaries along the entire 2,000 mile border whose exact location is recognized by, and acceptable to, both sides. It is possible, then, that the PRC's choice of this border indicated a reluctance on her part to risk creating a situation that might develop into a major military confrontation with India. The status quo could much more easily be restored after clashes and incursions along a mutually recognized border, than it could along a disputed frontier

²²Barnds, Great Powers, p. 211.

where each move by the other side might be regarded as posing a future threat to one's own position and interests in the area.

After the Kashmir war, China's attitude toward the border issue stiffened. Evidence of this is provided by the fact that in 1966, Peking eliminated the twenty kilometer "demilitarized zone" which she had created after her unilateral withdrawal of troops in 1962. In reply to a protest by New Delhi, Peking stated that in light of the nearly four hundred Indian intrusions between December, 1962 and mid-1966, the move represented an exercise of China's inherent right to take "precautionary and self-defense measures against Indian intrusions and provocations".²³

After Moscow's decision in mid-1968 to provide limited military assistance to Pakistan, Prime Minister Gandhi evidently felt a need to increase her maneuverability by easing tensions along the Sino-Indian border. In August, 1968, and again in January, 1969, New Delhi indicated India's willingness to discuss the border dispute without requiring Peking to meet her former pre-conditions. There was no Chinese response, and the border situation remained essentially unchanged through 1970.

²³"India's Slanders Cannot Cover Up Intrusions into Chinese Territory," Peking Review, No. 20, 20 May, 1966, pp. 42-43.

INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS

Soviet activism in South Asia dates from 1955. Since that time, the cornerstone of Soviet policy in that region has been the forging of a strong and broadly-based relationship with India. Initially designed to counter U.S. efforts to woo India into a closer alignment with the Western bloc, this policy has, more recently, been aimed at countering China.²⁴

A brief examination of the effect of Soviet policies toward India on the Sino-Indian relationship can provide a clearer understanding of how China viewed the growing "Moscow-New Delhi axis" in 1971.

Effects of the Bandung Conference

Until 1955, Soviet policy toward the countries of the Third World in general, and India in particular, had been looked upon with favor by the PRC. Since the Communist world maintained a monolithic approach to its competition with the West for the favor and support of the Afro-Asian nations, any success in this regard by either China or the USSR was viewed by the other as a positive gain for both. The Bandung Conference marked the end of this attitude, however, and the beginning of what was to become

²⁴Barnds, "Moscow and South Asia," p. 12.

a tense rivalry between the communist giants for the support and allegiance of the Third World countries.

The Soviet Union was not invited to Bandung, and viewed with apprehension the prominent role played there by Chou En-lai. That the PRC might gain an insuperable lead over it in the Afro-Asian countries became a real fear in the minds of the Soviet leaders, and it was this fear that generated the dramatic increase in Soviet activity and interest in India after 1955.²⁵

Diverging Sino-Soviet Lines

By 1958, the growing ideological dispute between China and the USSR began to make its presence felt in the approach both countries took toward their relations with India. The success of Sputnik in 1957 had convinced the Chinese that "the East wind has prevailed over the West wind", and that the time had come to press this advantage in dealings with the West. China's foreign policy, accordingly, shifted markedly in the direction of a harder and more militant line. On the other hand, Khrushchev believed that communist goals could best be achieved through a policy of peaceful competition with the West. A concomitant of this was his conviction that "peaceful transition (to socialism) through the parliamentary process" was the proper line for India and the other countries of the Third World to follow.

²⁵Hinton, China's Turbulent Quest, p. 72.

Central to this strategy was the diplomatic and economic support that the socialist countries could provide to prevent a rapprochement between the non-aligned, or neutral, states and the West. To the Chinese, this amounted to a renunciation of Marxist-Leninist doctrine.²⁶

Border Dispute, 1959

The worsening border problem between India and China soon became a battleground of the Sino-Soviet dispute. The border clashes in the late summer of 1959 presented the USSR with a dilemma; it could opt for socialist solidarity by siding with the PRC, or, in the sure knowledge that such a move would further strain its relations with Peking, it could declare its neutrality in the hope that India's gratitude toward the Soviet Union would keep it from moving closer to the West. It chose the latter course, and the Chinese response was predictable. The People's Daily denounced the Soviet move, and protested that this was:

. . . the first instance in history in which a socialist country, instead of condemning the armed provocation of the reactionaries of a capitalist country, condemned another fraternal socialist country when it was confronted by armed provocation.²⁷

²⁶Peking Review, 13 September, 1963, cited in Rohan Ram, Maoism in India (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1971), p. 13.

²⁷People's Daily, 27 February, 1963, cited in Maxwell, India's China War, p. 278.

India, however, was greatly encouraged by Moscow's move, and quickly sought further Soviet assistance. This took the form of Indian purchases of the Soviet transport aircraft and helicopters which it needed to support its "forward policy" on the Sino-Indian frontier.

In Peking's view, the USSR had now gone beyond the ideological error of giving the Nehru Government diplomatic and moral support, and had committed the treachery of supplying it with the very equipment it needed to further its aggressive moves on the frontier with China.²⁸

1962-1970: State and Ideological Considerations

China's military action against India in 1962 can be viewed as an attempt by Peking to force a change in Soviet policies toward India by providing Moscow with a clear-cut choice between New Delhi and Peking. If this was China's intent, however, it backfired, for after the war New Delhi turned desperately toward both the Soviet Union and the West for increased military assistance, thus widening - not eliminating - Sino-Soviet differences over India. On the one hand, the USSR charged Peking with forcing India to move closer to the West. On the other, China established that India was no longer "non-aligned", but rather, was all too willing to accept military assistance from the West, and

²⁸Maxwell, India's China War, p. 286.

diplomatic and military aid from the USSR. To Peking, the Soviet position represented an incorrect line and a deliberate sacrifice of Chinese interests.²⁹

Sino-Soviet competition in India took on an added dimension in the middle and late 1960's. In the Chinese view, the Soviets were holding India up as a show-case of "revisionist" concepts like "peaceful transition", and was commending the Indian example to Burma, Indonesia and other Third World countries. The PRC, therefore, felt the need for a radical reassertion of the Chinese model of revolution for the Third World. Just as the Soviets were determined to prove that "peaceful transition" was possible in India, the Chinese were determined to prove that it was not, and that India's path to socialism lay in an agrarian revolution through a Maoist "people's war."³⁰ (This conviction on the part of Peking led to its limited support of insurgencies in northeast India in the late 1960's, and will be discussed below.)

During the Cultural Revolution, Peking became ever more convinced that India was the central figure in an attempt by the U.S. and the Soviet Union to contain her. This

²⁹Ram, Maoism in India, p. 36.

³⁰Ibid., p. 37.

feeling of paranoia was, perhaps, vindicated when, in 1969, Leonid Brezhnev proposed that an Asian collective security system be formed. The proposal left no doubt in Peking that the alliance would be directed against China.⁵¹ This collective security arrangement was rejected by India - perhaps in hopes of receiving a positive reply from Peking regarding her offer in January to negotiate the border problem - and Indo-Soviet relations remained qualitatively unchanged until the signing of the Indo-Soviet treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in August, 1971.

CHINA AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (CPI)

The Communist Party in India is a legal political organization whose considerable strength has, at various times, enabled it to share control of the administrative apparatus in several State governments. During the 1950's and early 1960's, the Party's leadership was generally oriented toward Moscow, but by 1964 a left-right split had developed along pro-Moscow/pro-Peking lines. These factions later split again, so that by 1969, a three-sided Party structure had evolved.

A brief examination of Peking's influence on the communist movement in India, and her attempt to use this

⁵¹Peking Review, No. 29, 18 July, 1969, p. 23.

influence to further her national interests would be of value in attempting to determine China's attitude toward "people's war" in northeastern India at the time of the rebellion in East Pakistan.

The CPI Splits: 1962-1964

The differences within the CPI in 1960 centered around the issue of Party strategy. The leftists urged a non-capitalist path, and argued that the bourgeoisie should be the CPI's key target. Translated into political action, this philosophy amounted to all-out opposition to the Nehru government. The rightists called for the CPI to adopt a "national-democratic" approach, involving a struggle against the "big bourgeoisie" and "imperialists," and some cooperation with progressive Congress Party elements. (The Congress Party has governed India since Independence.) The moderates supported a non-capitalist path entirely within a democratic political context. Moscow dispatched its top ideologue, Mikhail Suslov, to guide the CPI Party Congress in 1961 and hold the Party together. Nevertheless, the split had worsened by 1962.³²

As Sino-Indian relations deteriorated and war broke out, the leftist Party elements adopted a pro-Peking stance. This led to a formal break in 1964 when the rightist CPI

³²Barnds, "Moscow and South Asia," p. 21.

and the leftist CPI (Marxist) held separate congresses. Before long, the CPI (M) moved away from its pro-Peking orientation toward a more independent line and an acceptance of parliamentary methods. But ultra-radical Maoist elements within the CPI (M) regarded participation in government as a betrayal of Marxist-Leninist doctrine. In 1967, individual groups of these Maoists began to incite peasant insurrections and conduct guerrilla operations.³³

The Naxalite Movement

One such peasant revolt led by CPI (M) extremists in Naxalbari, in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, (where, incidentally, the Party already shared power at the State level), was hailed by the Chinese media as the "spring thunder" of the Indian revolution.³⁴ Had not the PRC so precipitously endorsed the Naxalbari uprising, it probably would have remained a local incident. But Peking's support changed the situation qualitatively, and encouraged Maoist elements in several other states - notably Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Kerala - to organize local uprisings.³⁵

Peking was convinced that the Indian situation was

³³Bhabani Sen Gupta, "India's Rival Communist Models," Problems of Communism, January-February, 1973, p. 3.

³⁴Peking Review, No. 29, 14 July, 1967, pp. 22-23.

³⁵Bhabani Sen Gupta, "Indian Communism and the Peasantry," Problems of Communism, January-February, 1973, p. 6.

ripe for a protracted "people's war", and took the occasion of the "Naxalite" uprisings to spell out the Maoist line for India. The Indian revolution "must take the road of relying on the peasants, establishing base areas in the countryside, persisting in protracted armed struggle and using the countryside to encircle and finally capture the cities," asserted the People's Daily.³⁶

The Chinese apparently hoped that by calling for revolutionary armed struggle in rural areas they could secure a shift in the tactical line of the CPI (M), which had equivocated on armed struggle and, like the Moscow-backed CPI, had taken the parliamentary path. But the CPI (M) rejected the Chinese interpretation of the Indian political scene, and declared its ideological independence of Peking as well as Moscow. (The CPI, however, continues to regard the CPI (M) as pro-Chinese.)

The CPI (M) "revisionist" leadership eventually turned on the Naxalite extremists, and joined with the West Bengal state government to crush the revolt. This brought a bitter denunciation of the CPI (M) leadership by Peking, and probably contributed to the formation of the CPI (Marxist-Leninist).³⁷

³⁶Peking Review, No. 33, 3 August, 1967, p. 21.

³⁷Ram, Maoism in India, pp. 57-60.

The CPI (Marxist-Leninist)

Extreme-left Maoist elements of the CPI (M), disillusioned by the reluctance of that party to engage in "revolutionary struggle", broke away and formed the pro-Peking CPI (Marxist-Leninist) in 1969. Like the CPI (M), the CPI(M-L) lays primary emphasis on mobilizing the peasantry, but rejects the parliamentary process as a means of conducting revolution. Instead it adheres to Maoist doctrine in advocating protracted guerrilla warfare waged from rural base areas.

By January, 1970, the police, with the occasional aid of the army, had generally contained the Naxalite movements, and organized guerrilla activity began to disintegrate rapidly. After the early months of 1970, the Indian Communist revolution had dwindled to little more than urban terrorism in West Bengal.³⁸

SUMMARY

Sino-Indian relations in early 1971 can be described as being in a state of restrained hostility. The border dispute remained unresolved and constituted a potential source of conflict that could be touched-off any time that either side became dissatisfied with the status quo. In Chinese eyes, India had completely forsaken her former policy of "non-alignment", and now served as the primary base for a

³⁸Sen Gupta, "Indian Communism," p. 3.

U.S.-Soviet strategy designed to encircle and contain her. Soviet economic and military aid to India had significantly increased both Indian power and Chinese apprehension, and had intensified China's antipathy for the anti-revolutionary "revisionist" line being followed in Moscow. Finally, Peking continued, with diminishing success to openly encourage Maoist revolutionary activity in West Bengal, and concurrently, to protest against India's internal policies against the pro-Peking CPI (M-L).

CHAPTER IV

CHINA'S SUPPORT FOR "WARS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION"

Since 1949, Peking's oft-professed and loudly proclaimed support for revolutionary movements, or "wars of national liberation", has been one of the more obvious aspects of China's involvement on the international scene. While employing this tactic in pursuit of its foreign policy objectives, however, the PRC has, more often than not, used it in conjunction with other more traditional forms of diplomacy. As Franz Michael points out:

China's propagandists are quite able to pursue a militant line supporting revolutionary activity in neighboring countries while simultaneously endorsing the principles of peaceful coexistence and non-interference in other nation's affairs.¹

The purpose of this chapter will be to examine Peking's support for revolutionary movements since 1949 in an effort to derive an understanding of how the PRC has used this tactic within the broad scope of strategies which it employs in pursuit of its foreign policy goals. Such an understanding is essential if the Chinese foreign policy decisions of 1971

¹Franz Michael, "A Design for Aggression," Problems of Communism, January-April, 1971, p. 68.

relating to the Indian subcontinent are to be viewed in their proper context.

EVOLUTION OF CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY: 1949-1971

1949-1952: Armed Struggle

After the Chinese Communists came to power in 1949, their principal foreign policy concerns were to secure and defend China's borders, build a close alliance with the other Communist parties of Asia and the rest of the world (including strengthening the Sino-Soviet alliance), and, partly as a means of achieving the first two objectives, to encourage and support wherever possible the rash of communist-led insurgencies which had broken out in South and Southeast Asia by 1949 (Indo-China, India, the Philippines, Malaya, Burma and Indonesia).²

With the apparent acquiescence of Moscow, China proclaimed itself the leader of "national liberation" struggles and revolutionary movements throughout Asia. To the leaders in Peking, the world was now sharply divided into two "camps." There was no "neutrality", no "third road", and, hence, revolution was urged in all Asian countries where the leadership had not expressly rejected the United States and accepted the Soviet bloc. This stand indicates the degree to

²Peter Van Ness, Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 11.

which ideology prevailed in the formulation of Chinese foreign policy during this period.³

In a speech in Peking in November, 1949, Liu Shao-Ch'i, then the second-ranking Chinese Communist theoretician, set forth the strategic prescription that should be followed by the other Asian Communists:

The path taken by the Chinese people in defeating imperialism and its lackeys and in founding the People's Republic of China is the path that should be taken by the people of the various colonial and semi-colonial countries in their fight for national independence and people's democracy . . . Armed struggle can, and must, be the main force in the people's liberation struggles in many colonial and semi-colonial countries."

The Chinese formula enunciated by Liu stressed two essential elements. The first was a call to the Asian Communist parties to capture effective control of local nationalist movements by concentrating their main attacks against external "imperialist" enemies. The second was a directive to organize communist-led peasant armies which would operate from communist-controlled base areas. While emphasizing the importance of relying on "armed struggle", however, Liu did admit that for the rest of Asia, successful

³Allen S. Whiting, China Crosses the Yalu (Stanford: University Press, 1960), pp. 31-32.

⁴Liu Shao-Ch'i, 16 November, 1949, speech, NCNA, 13 November, 1949.

application of the Chinese model could probably be achieved only "where similar conditions prevail".⁵

Peking's opportunities for really significant action in support of these revolts was limited. Either the local communist movement was ineffective, the opposition was too strong, the country was not contiguous to China or a combination of these factors prevailed. The PRC did, however, provide propaganda support, denounced the leaders of the opposition and in some cases provided limited amounts of material aid and support.⁶

The PRC's emphasis on "armed struggle" continued through 1951, but by 1952 the realities of the changing Asian situation led to a shift in Chinese strategy. With the exception of Vietnam, the Communist insurrections in South and Southeast Asia had generally ended in failure. By the end of 1951, Peking was becoming increasingly preoccupied with the dangerous situation in Korea, and more and more concerned about the lack of foreign diplomatic support which she could muster to counter possible further American military threats or pressure in Asia.⁷ Thus, it may have been a realization

⁵A. Doak Barnett, Communist China and Asia (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), p. 155.

⁶Harold C. Hinton, China's Turbulent Quest (New York: Macmillan Co., 1970), p. 52.

⁷Barnett, Communist China, p. 96.

that its revolutionary objectives were largely unattainable in the short run, and that its national interest could best be served by trying to mobilize the diplomatic support of the non-Communist Asian states on the issue of Korea, that led Peking to refrain, albeit not totally or permanently, from seeking to stir up subversion and communist insurrection, and to emphasize "peaceful coexistence".

Another view, however, is that the PRC's shift in strategy during this period was due, rather, to a desire on the part of Peking to take advantage of the sharp shift away from support of United States policies which occurred among non-Communist Asian leaders during the Korean War.⁸ Both of these factors probably contributed to China's decision to change her foreign policy approach - the first providing the motivation, and the second providing the opportunity.

1953-1957: The "Era of Peaceful Coexistence"

By the end of 1952, Peking had begun to cultivate neutral governments and to encourage Asian allies of the United States to shift to a position of neutrality. As described in Chapter III, India became the key country in the PRC's new strategy. Nehru's influence among the neutral countries of the Afro-Asian bloc and his friendliness towards China afforded Peking an increased opportunity for

⁸Whiting, China Crosses the Yalu, p. 32.

expanding her own influence in the Third World.

In June, 1954, Nehru joined with Chou En-lai in proclaiming the "Five Principles of Coexistence", and China asserted for the first time that "revolution is not for export".

The Afro-Asian Conference held at Bandung, Indonesia, in April, 1955, marked the high point in good relations between China and the Asian neutral nations. It also saw the beginnings of an aggressive Chinese policy designed to develop a strong position in the Middle East at the expense of the Western powers. With Nehru's help, Chou took advantage of the Bandung meeting to cultivate Egypt's Nasser. To a large extent because of the relationship established in this way, Peking soon gained a highly influential role in the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, which was formed in Cairo at the end of 1957. At the same time, Chinese propaganda directed toward Africa and Asia sought to capitalize on the "spirit of Bandung" by stressing the theme of Afro-Asian solidarity.¹⁰

Despite its primary reliance on peaceful coexistence

⁹"Joint Communique of Chou En-lai and Jawaharlal Nehru (June, 1954)," cited in Winberg Chai, The Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1972), p. 166.

¹⁰Hinton, China's Turbulent Quest, p. 250.

and state-to-state diplomacy to further its national interests during the mid-1950's, Peking did not totally abandon its long-term revolutionary aims. It did appear willing, however, to rely at least temporarily on the growth of the indigenous Communist parties throughout Asia, rather than on active Chinese support for revolutionary movements, as the primary means of achieving these aims. By 1957, the success of many of the Asian Communist parties, especially those of India and Indonesia, in expanding their membership and political influence must have strengthened the faith of the Chinese leadership in the efficacy of this strategy. In Indonesia, Communist party membership is claimed to have jumped from 8,000 in 1952 to over one million in 1957. In the 1957 elections, it emerged as the strongest single party on Java, the center of political power in Indonesia. In India, the Communist party doubled in size between 1952 and 1957. In the 1957 elections, its strength was second only to that of the ruling Congress party of Prime Minister Nehru, and it won control of the government in the state of Kerala.¹¹

1958-1965: A Return to Radical Diplomacy

By late 1957, however, developments both at home and abroad had begun to occur which were to dramatically alter China's approach to foreign relations. In a wide range of Asian countries, including Singapore, Burma, Indonesia,

¹¹Barnett, Communist China, p. 162.

Thailand, Malaya and India, non-communist military leaders, or political leaders with military backing, began to clamp down on local Communist party activities.¹²

The success of the Russian Sputnik in October, 1957, and the Soviet promise that same month to assist Peking in the development of a thermonuclear capability probably contributed significantly to China's conviction that "the East wind has prevailed over the West wind," and she began to urge a more militantly "anti-imperialist" strategy on the Soviet Union.¹³ At home, Peking's launching of the Great

¹²In Singapore, the government arrested several key leaders of the pro-Peking faction of the People's Action Party, and the police attempted to limit communist activity in the labor unions and schools. In the fall of 1958, General Ne Win took over the Premiership of Burma from U Nu, and proceeded to take vigorous measures against communist guerrillas and Communist members of the National United Front. In Indonesia, when it appeared that Communist party strength was such that it might be able to win the national elections scheduled for 1959, military leaders began gradually to limit Communist party activities, and announced in September, 1958, that the 1959 elections were to be postponed. Also in the fall of 1958, Field Marshal Thanarat took over the government of Thailand in a military coup, dissolved the National Assembly, banned all political parties and stepped up efforts to suppress communist insurgents. After the achievement of independence by Malaya in August, 1957, the new government under Tunjku Abdul Rahman exerted strong pressure on the Communist party, with the result that guerrilla surrenders steadily increased while party membership suffered a marked decline. And in India, in 1959, the Central Government ousted the Communist government of Kerala State, which had come to power in the elections of 1957. Barnett, Communist China, pp. 488-498.

¹³J. D. Simmonds, China's World (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 171.

Leap Forward and the commune experiment served to illustrate the pronounced shift toward an extreme leftist orientation that was taking place in Chinese domestic politics during this same period.

By 1959, too, China's relations with the Soviet Union were rapidly deteriorating. Khrushchev's refusal to aid Peking militarily during the offshore islands confrontation in 1958, his cancellation in June, 1959 of the Soviet offer of atomic assistance and the abrupt withdrawal from the PRC of Russian technical advisors a year later all contributed to the atmosphere of increasing hostility between the two countries, and most likely led China to question the wisdom of following the Soviet policy line.¹⁴

Thus, by the late 1950's a combination of circumstances, including setbacks to many of the Communist parties in Asia, the failure of the Great Leap Forward, the growing differences with the Soviet Union and the increasingly militant character of Chinese domestic politics, all contributed to a reorientation of the PRC's foreign policy line away from the peaceful coexistence policy of the Bandung era. Peking did not revert to a dogmatic reliance on revolutionary tactics alone, however. In quoting a speech by Mao

¹⁴William E. Griffith, The Sino-Soviet Rift (Cambridge: The M. I. T. Press, 1964), p. 12.

Tse-tung, Peking Review, as early as November, 1958, provided an indication of the dual approach to foreign relations which China was to adopt during this period: "Peaceful coexistence and revolutionary struggle are . . . not contradictory: the two help each other forward."¹⁵ Nevertheless, support for revolutionary movements was to play an important role in China's new diplomacy. A captured People's Liberation Army document, classified "secret" and published in April, 1961, described the guidelines laid down by the Chinese for the conduct of their foreign policy in the early 1960's. Referring to the revolutionary movement in the "colonial and semi-colonial" areas of the world, the document stated:

There are two attitudes towards the national democratic revolutionary movement. The first is to maintain good relationships with the Western countries, giving no or little support to the national revolutionary movement. The second is to support the national revolutionary movement as a general principle with the possibility of having some contacts with the Western countries, but only for secondary reasons. Our country adopted the latter attitude, with the firm resolution to support the national democratic revolutionary movement, and oppose colonialism and imperialism. While we may have some contacts with the Western countries, we shall never let these contacts gain the upper hand.¹⁶

Unlike the period of the late 1940's and early 1950's,

¹⁵Peking Review, No. 37, 11 November, 1958, p. 1.

¹⁶J. Chester Cheng (ed.), The Politics of the Chinese Red Army, Work Bulletin No. 17, 25 April, 1961 (Stanford: Hoover Institution Publications, 1966), 483.

however, Peking now showed little concern for advancing the Maoist revolutionary model, or even for requiring Communist party leadership of a revolutionary movement as a pre-condition for Chinese support. Peter Van Ness, in his book Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy posits, rather, that China's primary concern, either in supporting wars of national liberation or establishing friendly official or semi-official relations with other countries, was a desire to win adherents to the Chinese program for radical change in the international system. In China's view, every move to the left in the countries of the Third World - no matter how or why it was initiated - would mean another step in the undermining of support in that area for the United States, and constituted a positive move toward attainment of China's "national" goals. Yet, at the same time, change in a leftward direction - revolutionary or not - also implied progression toward China's "ideological" goal of world communism. In any case, the most important factor governing Chinese policy toward an individual country or movement was not its political character or proclaimed ideology, but rather the foreign policy which it pursued and its attitude towards China.¹⁷

An example of this pragmatic approach which characterized China's foreign relations during the pre-Cultural

¹⁷Van Ness, Chinese Foreign Policy, pp. 189-197.

Revolution period of the 1960's was Peking's cultivation of the Algerian National Liberation Front. This organization provided the PRC with a more militant alternative to Nasser, and after 1958 was held up by Peking as a model for emulation throughout the Third World. After becoming independent in 1962, Algeria became a significant base for Chinese activities in North Africa, and provided her with an opportunity for exploitation of the turbulence caused by the de-colonization then taking place in Sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁸

China's interest in Africa at this time was more than incidental. Statements in the PLA Work Bulletin (Kung Tso T'ung Hsun) quoted above indicate that, as viewed from Peking, the focus of revolutionary struggle against colonialism and imperialism in the Third World had shifted from Asia to Africa:

Africa is now both the center of anti-colonialist struggle and the center for East and West to fight for control of the intermediary zone.¹⁹ . . . The general situation

¹⁸Hinton, China's Turbulent Quest, p. 252.

¹⁹The Chinese currently maintain that there are, in fact, two "intermediate zones". The first, and the one apparently referred to here, includes "the Asian, African and Latin American countries which have suffered from colonialist and imperialist aggression and oppression in the past and are today carrying on a valient struggle against imperialism and colonialism, and especially against the two superpowers". The second intermediate zone includes "the major capitalist countries both in the West and in the East except the two superpowers. These countries, too, are subjected to the control, intervention and bullying of the two overlords to varying degrees. . ." Peking Review, No. 45, 10 November, 1972, p. 8.

is the forced withdrawal of old colonialism from Asia or at least a part of Asia, and the changing of the last battlefield to Africa . . . Africa is now like a huge political exhibition, where a hundred flowers are truly blooming, waiting there for anybody to pick.²⁰

Peking thus appeared to have oriented her foreign policy efforts toward Africa, and had professed her intention to rely primarily on the support of revolutionary movements to achieve her aims in the Third World. In practice, however, China pursued her diplomatic offensive of the early 1960's on a rather broad front. For example, this period saw increased Chinese activity in Afro-Asian organizations and trips by Liu Shao-Ch'i and Chou En-lai to numerous Asian and African countries. After 1961, a close relationship was developed with the Sukarno regime in Indonesia. During 1963 and 1964 there were marked increases in trade relations with several countries, and agreements were reached with Japan for the exchange of trade delegations and newsmen. State-to-state contacts were vigorously expanded. Between 1958 and 1965 this "official" aspect of Chinese foreign relations resulted in diplomatic recognition of the PRC by twenty-two non-communist governments - including France. At the same time, unofficial "people's diplomacy" was exploited by Peking to a greater degree, perhaps, than had been seen prior to

²⁰J. Chester Cheng (ed.), The Politics of the Chinese Red Army, Work Bulletin No. 17, 25 April, 1961 (Stanford: Hoover Institution Publications, 1966), 484.

this time.²¹ During the two-month period of August-September, 1964, twenty-eight visits by students, women, lawyers, doctors and other professional or interest groups were made to China from African countries alone. Also, an exchange of correspondents was made with Canada and the Federal Republic of Germany- neither of which had recognized Communist China.²²

Another aspect of China's diplomatic pragmatism which evolved during this period is worth mentioning here. Although Africa was now considered by Peking to be the focus of the East-West struggle, and support of national revolutionary movements was her professed policy, China nonetheless, as early as 1961, had already begun to stress the importance of self-reliance and self-sufficiency to the ultimate success of any revolutionary movement. Speaking once again of the situation in Africa, the PLA Work Bulletin of 25 April, 1961, emphasized that the African states:

²¹This tactic has been used extensively by the PRC at various times in the past, especially with regard to the Afro-Asian bloc of Third World nations. Large numbers of these groups, whether from Communist countries or not, are invited to visit China, and are then encouraged to support policies in their own countries which are compatible with Peking's objectives.

²²Robert Blum, The United States and China in World Affairs, ed. A. Doak Barnett (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), pp. 75-77.

. . . must depend mainly on their own experience, for foreign assistance can come only second . . . Among the independent countries in Africa, if only one or two of them complete a real national revolution, solving their own problem of resisting imperialism and reaching an internal solution of a democratic national revolution, the effect will be very great . . . the revolutionary wave will be able to swallow the whole African continent. . . [Emphasis added.]²³

Mao stressed this point in talks with "African friends" in August, 1963: "In the fight for complete liberation, the oppressed people rely first of all on their own struggle and then, and only then, on international assistance."²⁴

In September, 1965, Lin Piao's now famous article, "Long Live the Victory of People's War," reiterated and formalized this corollary of Peking's policy of support for wars of national liberation. According to Lin:

In order to make a revolution and to fight a people's war and be victorious, it is imperative to adhere to the policy of self-reliance (and) rely on the strength of the masses in one's own country. . . If one does not operate by one's own efforts, does not independently ponder and solve the problems of the revolution in one's own country and does not rely on the strength of the masses but leans wholly on foreign aid - even though this be aid from

²³J. Chester Cheng (ed.), The Politics of the Chinese Red Army, Work Bulletin No. 17, 25 April, 1961 (Stanford: Hoover Institution Publications, 1966), 485.

²⁴Peking Review, No. 45, 10 November, 1972, p. 8.

socialist countries which persist in revolution
- no victory can be won. . .²⁵

For China now to stress the virtue of self-reliance in revolutionary struggle was not so much a change of policy, or lessening of revolutionary fervor on the part of Peking, as it was a public acknowledgement of an "objective reality" which had existed for years. Except in the case of the contiguous Asian states, where material and other forms of aid could be channeled across the border, the PRC's capability to provide much more than political and moral support for revolutionary movements was, and still is, extremely limited. Yet another constraint, however, mitigated against China's active participation in foreign revolutions. That is the moral conviction that revolutionary movements must have the support of the people in order to gain power. For that reason, the success or failure of a Communist revolution depends far more on the ability of the local Communist party to satisfy the economic, social and political needs of the people than on any material assistance that might be provided by a foreign power.

By 1965, both the diplomatic and revolutionary aspects of Chinese foreign relations had received setbacks,

²⁵Lin Piao, Long Live the Victory of People's War (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1967), p. 41.

but the diplomatic approach suffered the worst. Relations with Cuba were strained almost to the breaking point by Peking's anti-Soviet proselytizing among Army officers and other officials.²⁶ Heavy-handed Chinese interference in the internal affairs of many African states had created a surge of anti-Chinese feeling which resulted in the breaking of diplomatic relations with China by Burundi, Dahomey, the Central African Republic and Ghana.²⁷

Two of the greatest blows to China's ambitions in the Third World, however, occurred in Indonesia and Algeria. The second Afro-Asian Conference, which Peking had advocated since 1963 and which was scheduled to convene in June, 1965 in Algiers, never took place. China's overbearing attitude toward the prospective participants, and her attempts to exploit the conference for her own purposes (especially in regard to her efforts to bar participation by the Soviet Union, to whom many of the Afro-Asian nations looked for aid) so irritated many of the participants that the conference was postponed and eventually cancelled.²⁸

²⁶Cecil Johnson, Communist China and Latin America, 1967 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p.

²⁷John H. Garvin, China and Africa, 1949-1970 (Berkeley: California Press, 1971), pp.

By the spring of 1965, China's relations with Indonesia were probably closer than with any other country. For this reason, the failure of the coup by the Indonesian Communist Party on 30 September, and the resulting decimation of the Communist party membership came as a heavy blow to Peking's prestige and influence in Indonesia, and to her hopes of using her friendship with Djakarta to advance her aims in Southeast Asia.²⁹ Thus, this period ended on a sour note for China's foreign relations.

1966-1968: The Cultural Revolution

Although the Cultural Revolution was primarily a domestic phenomenon during which China's leaders were more concerned with the internal struggle against "revisionism" than with foreign affairs, Chinese foreign relations during this period inevitably bore the mark of the "radicalization" of Chinese domestic politics. One reason, of course, was that once "revisionism" became the principal domestic enemy, it soon followed that revisionist policies abroad, as practised by the Soviet Union, would replace "U.S. imperialism" as the main issue around which Chinese foreign policy revolved. Thus, the pragmatism which had been characteristic of Chinese foreign relations in the early 1960's gave way to a new emphasis on ideology, and thus, to renewed espousal of revolutionary struggle, as the Maoists strived

²⁹Simmonds, China's World, p. 106.

to establish their claims to theoretical orthodoxy and defeat the "three peacefuls" of Soviet foreign policy in the Third World - peaceful coexistence, peaceful transition (to socialism) and peaceful competition.³⁰

Beginning in the summer of 1966, Chinese rhetoric became more and more revolutionary. In January, 1967, an appraisal of the events of the previous year began with a quotation by Mao Tse-tung: "We are now in a great new era of world revolution. The revolutionary upheaval in Asia, Africa and Latin America is sure to deal the whole of the old world a decisive and crushing blow."³¹ In an article entitled "China: Toward Revolutionary Pragmatism," Harry Harding states that Peking's foreign relations during this period were, indeed, based on a conscious design on the part of the Chinese to emphasize "people-to-people" rather than "state-to-state" diplomacy in support of revolutionary movements on all continents.³² Melvin Gurtov, however, suggests that the radicalization and deterioration of China's foreign relations during the Cultural Revolution were not deliberate, but were due, instead, to a lack of central control from Peking, and

³⁰Van Ness, Chinese Foreign Policy, pp. 211-214.

³¹Peking Review, No. 3, 13 January, 1967, p. 21.

³²Harry Harding, "China: Toward Revolutionary Pragmatism," Asian Survey, XI, No. 1 (January, 1971), 51.

attempts by lower level personnel in Chinese embassies overseas to avoid criticism by demonstrating their militancy.³³ Gurtov's analysis would seem to be the more probable, as by the summer of 1967 all but one of China's ambassadors had been recalled from overseas, and Chinese foreign "policy", as such, was practically non-existent, having been replaced by what Hinton calls "Red Guard diplomacy". The PRC Foreign Minister Ch'en Yi, had been attacked by the Red Guards for allegedly being "non-revolutionary." The British diplomatic compound in Peking had been sacked and burned, and attacks on foreigners and demonstrations against foreign embassies had become common. On 19 August, Red Guards seized control of the Foreign Ministry itself, and were not ousted until five days later. Under these conditions, Chinese foreign relations were more "diplomacy by exception" than by design. By the end of August, however, Chou En-lai and Ch'en Yi had regained effective control over foreign relations, and a limited trend toward moderation took place in Chinese diplomacy. Measures were initiated during the rest of 1967 and into 1968 to rectify some of the damage which had occurred in the PRC's relations with more than thirty countries. Overall, however, China's prestige and influence had been dealt blows by the Cultural Revolution from which it could

³³Melvin Gurtov, "The Foreign Ministry and Foreign Affairs During the Cultural Revolution," China Quarterly, No. 40 (October-December, 1969), 100.

not easily recover.³⁴

1969-1971: New Diplomatic Initiatives

By early 1969, a definite shift to the right could be perceived in Chinese foreign relations. State-to-state diplomacy once again became a major, if not dominant, factor in the conduct of Peking's foreign policy, as China attempted to establish new diplomatic ties and restore those that had been seriously strained by the excesses of the Cultural Revolution.

The factors which prompted China's diplomatic offensive were many, but without doubt, apprehension over the growing Soviet military buildup on her borders were a primary consideration. After emerging from the Cultural Revolution, the PRC found that her international position had deteriorated to one of weakness, isolation and ineffectiveness. Peking's leaders may well have calculated that perpetuation of this image might increase the probability of a Soviet attack. China's diplomatic isolation would make it all the more difficult, too, to bring the pressure of international opinion to bear in order to deter any Soviet aggression.³⁵ The promulgation of the Brezhnev Doctrine in 1968

³⁴Hinton, China's Turbulent Quest, pp. 153-155.

³⁵Morton H. Halperin, "China's New Diplomacy," Problems of Communism, November-December, 1971, p. 30.

undoubtedly served to heighten China's apprehension, as she must have regarded it as an instrument which could be invoked to justify Soviet interference in the internal affairs of any socialist state - like Czechoslovakia, . . . or China. The clashes with Soviet forces on the Ussuri River and the Sinkiang border in the spring of 1969 no doubt gave added impetus to Peking's drive to improve her international position and preempt any possibility of an attack by Russia.

The Soviet threat was not the only concern in Peking. The United States continued to escalate the war in Vietnam, and a resurgence of Japanese militarism was considered a real possibility. In addition, the major Communist parties of Asia - those of Korea, Japan and Vietnam - were seriously alienated, and relations with the non-Communist countries of the Third World were at a new low ebb. Thus, by 1969, China found it imperative to establish a new foreign policy line - one that would improve her position without sacrificing principle.³⁶

Throughout 1970, official Chinese statements consistently emphasized the PRC's willingness to establish or improve diplomatic relations with all countries, regardless of social systems, on the basis of the Five Principles of

³⁶Hinton, China's Turbulent Quest, p. 156.

Co-existence.³⁷ This apparent relegation of the ideological component of Chinese foreign policy to a position of secondary importance in order to advance her national interest inevitably placed Peking at a disadvantage vis-a-vis Moscow. The ideological position that revolutionary wars should not be abandoned or ignored for reasons of national expediency had been, and continues to be, one of the key issues in the dispute with the Soviet Union. It was, therefore, practically impossible for Peking to even tacitly admit any deviation from this position without losing ground to the Soviet Union in its claims to ideological orthodoxy.³⁸ Thus, the importance to the Chinese of strengthening their international position through state-to-state diplomacy during this period is evidenced by the fact that Peking was willing to leave itself open to criticism by Moscow on ideological grounds by praising the action of the Sudan government in cracking down on pro-Moscow Communists who led an attempted coup in the summer of 1970.³⁹

In August, 1971, a joint editorial in People's Daily marking the forty-fourth anniversary of the People's

³⁷Harding, "Revolutionary Pragmatism," p. 62.

³⁸C. P. Fitzgerald, "China's New Diplomacy," Problems of Communism, November-December, 1971, p. 22.

³⁹New York Times, 23 December, 1971, p. 2, col. 3.

Liberation Army formally laid down the PRC's new foreign policy line:

The foreign policy of our party and government is firm and unshakable. It is: To develop relations of friendship, mutual assistance and cooperation with socialist countries on the principle of proletarian internationalism; to support and assist the revolutionary struggles of all the oppressed people and nations; and to strive for peaceful coexistence with countries having different systems on the basis of the Five Principles of mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, and to oppose the imperialist policies of aggression and war . . . Whoever opposes imperialism or makes revolution has our support. . . .⁴⁰

Sufficient latitude was hereby afforded Peking's decision-makers to selectively exploit any opportunity that arose to advance either China's ideological goals or national interests, or both if they coincided. It is interesting to note that this pronouncement came scarcely two months before fighting broke out on the subcontinent between India and Pakistan.

China's diplomatic offensive was pursued on many fronts during 1970 and 1971. Numerous foreign delegations were welcomed in Peking. Aid agreements were signed with North Vietnam, Albania and North Korea, and loans were extended to Zambia, Tanzania, Ceylon and Rumania. By the

⁴⁰Peking Review, No. 32, 6 August, 1971, p. 9.

beginning of 1971, ambassadors had again been posted to nearly three-fourths of the PRC's embassies overseas.⁴¹ Important aspects of the new campaign included Peking's drive for United Nations membership, and an apparent willingness to seek better relations with the United States. Another aspect was China's renewed bid for leadership in the Third World, not through support for revolutionary movements, but by means of state-to-state diplomacy - an approach which Peking had criticized Moscow for using. A fourth aspect was the PRC's effort to strengthen regionalism in the Balkans in order to undermine Moscow's control.⁴²

While Chinese efforts in the international field after 1969 appeared to indicate a shift toward moderation, and a lessened reliance on subversion and revolution to achieve her goals, the support of revolutionary movements was still very much a stated aim of Chinese foreign policy. On 19 May, 1971 a joint People's Daily, Red Flag and Liberation Army Daily editorial hailed a Mao statement of a year earlier that "revolution is the main trend in the world today," and called the pronouncement "a program for the anti-imperialist struggle waged by the Chinese people together with the revolutionary people throughout the world." On the same day, the New

⁴¹Harding, "Revolutionary Pragmatism, p. 62.

⁴²George E. Taylor, "China's New Diplomacy," Problems of Communism, January-February, 1972, p. 59.

China News Agency distributed an article proclaiming the progress of Communist movements in the Philippines, Formosa, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and North Borneo.⁴³

This revolutionary rhetoric served to convince some scholars that, far from showing a trend toward moderation, Chinese foreign policy had actually moved to the left and that China was now placing an even greater emphasis on supporting revolutionary movements. Franz Michael spoke of China's "decision to engage in more vigorous sponsorship and support of "wars of national liberation in Asia . . .," and asserted that "the clear intent of current Chinese policy is to promote, foster and support Communist revolutions . . . There is no reason why we should not accept the words and actions of the Chinese Communist leaders at face value . . ."⁴⁴ A dissenting viewpoint was offered by Allen Whiting, who noted "the ascendancy of moderation and traditional state-to-state relations over belligerence and support for revolutionary movements."⁴⁵

It is probable that Whiting's view was a more accurate

⁴³NCNA, 19 May, 1971, in SCMP, 71-21 (24-27 May, 1971), 169.

⁴⁴Michael, "Design for Aggression," p. 65

⁴⁵Allen S. Whiting, "China's New Diplomacy," Problems of Communism, November-December, 1971, p. 2.

assessment of the policy which guided Chinese foreign relations at the time. The continued ascerbity and revolutionary tone of the PRC's rhetoric while she sought to improve her international image and position through traditional diplomacy can be seen as an attempt to mollify the more revolutionary elements at home, while, at the same time, hopefully denying Moscow the opportunity to charge Peking with ideological back-sliding. In an interview with James Reston in August, 1971, Chou En-lai alluded to this idea that Chinese rhetoric may have other purposes than those which appear most obvious when he said that the PRC's slogans are not to be taken absolutely literally.⁴⁶

A Peking Review article in the summer of 1971, quoting Mao's "On Policy" (1940), outlined China's rationale for maintaining a dual approach to foreign policy:

. . . If it is all struggle and no alliance, we will not be able to unite all the forces that can be united and consolidate and develop the revolutionary united front . . . If it is only all alliance and no struggle, we will lose our revolutionary, principled stand, relinquish the Party's revolutionary leadership in the united front, the Party will disintegrate ideologically, politically and organizationally, and the revolution will fail.⁴⁷

⁴⁶New York Times, 10 August, 1971, p. 14, col. 1.

⁴⁷Peking Review, No. 35, 27 August, 1971, p. 13.

An example of Peking's ability to combine both "struggle" and "alliance" in a simultaneous approach can be seen in the visit of President Ne Win of Burma to Peking in August - the first sign of improved relations between the two countries since the near-break of 1967. The atmosphere of the visit was cordial, and Ne Win was accorded all the courtesies reserved for a Head of State, including a meeting with Mao. Before and after the visit, however, the clandestine "Voice of the People of Burma" radio, believed to be based in China, continued to attack the Burmese leader, declaring that the people of Burma would only improve their lot "when people's democratic power is established after Ne Win's military government is overthrown by an armed uprising."⁴⁸

Finally, Chinese "support" for wars of national liberation has rarely resulted in any substantial amounts of material assistance being provided to foreign insurgencies by Peking. Apart from the notable exception of Indochina, China has generally restricted its assistance to foreign revolutionaries to vocal moral support broadcast by the Chinese radio and published in the official press. As noted by Van Ness, even during the Cultural Revolution Peking's increasingly revolutionary rhetoric was not reflected in any greater material support for revolutionary movements than in

⁴⁸"Quarterly Chronical and Documentation," China Quarterly, No. 48 (October-December, 1971), 803.

the period before the Cultural Revolution began.⁴⁹ Lin Piao's admonition to foreign revolutionaries to rely primarily on their own efforts has been, and will probably continue to be, a major feature of Peking's foreign policy doctrine.

SUMMARY

Except, perhaps, during the heyday of the Bandung era, a professed willingness to support "wars of national liberation" has been a constant factor in Chinese foreign relations. Even when national interest has appeared to replace ideology as the primary factor determining Peking's policy line - as in the case of China's post-Cultural Revolution diplomacy - the Chinese have never denied themselves the option of selectively assisting revolutionary movements. On the other side of the coin, even during periods when ideology has been almost totally "in command", as in the worst days of the Cultural Revolution, Peking has not been totally indiscriminate in its support of foreign revolutions.

The spring of 1971 found China exerting great diplomatic efforts to strengthen her international positions vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. New relations were being formed and old ones renewed. There was an emphasis on pushing for

⁴⁹Van Ness, Chinese Foreign Policy, p. 249.

United Nations membership, trade with the West and a limited detente with the United States.⁵⁰ A de-emphasis of support for "wars of national liberation" seemed to have taken place, although China's dual approach to foreign relations of "alliance" and "struggle" permitted her a great deal of flexibility in her choice of policy options.

As the situation on the Indian subcontinent in 1971 progressed from crisis to war, Peking's flexibility was to be demonstrated perhaps more vividly than at any time since 1949.

⁵⁰Statistics compiled by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the French National Center for Foreign Trade showed that China's trade with capitalist countries comprised four-fifths of her total trade in 1970, as compared with one-fifth in 1960. New York Times, 1 August, 1971, p. 8, col. 1.

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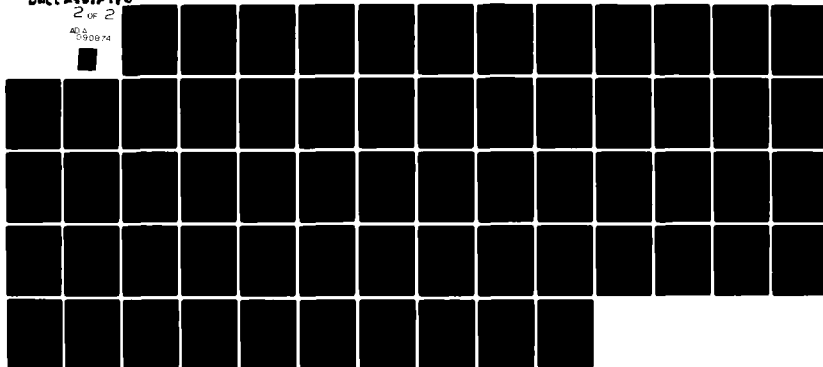
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CHAPTER V

THE CRISIS ON THE SUBCONTINENT AND THE ROLE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

By late March, 1971, the East Pakistan autonomy movement, under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League, threatened to divide politically a country already separated by a thousand miles of Indian territory and vast cultural differences. On the night of 25 March, the Pakistani army moved to crush this movement toward regional autonomy, and thus precipitated a crisis on the Indian subcontinent which eventually led to war between India and Pakistan in December, 1971.

The purpose of this chapter will be to analyze China's decision to support the government of Pakistan during this period instead of the revolutionary movement in East Bengal. An attempt will be made to determine what options China may have perceived as being open to her, and what factors she may have considered as constituting constraints on her actions. Finally, an analysis will be made of Peking's actions in the United Nations, and elsewhere, in support of Pakistan during the December war.

SUPPRESSION OF EAST PAKISTAN: A CRISIS EMERGES

After assuming power in March, 1969, General Yahya Khan made it clear that the military had no desire to maintain power indefinitely; rather, he was willing to return the government to civilian control provided that the integrity and sovereignty of the country would remain intact. Accordingly, the first general election in Pakistan's history was held in December, 1970.¹

Although the election itself was conducted smoothly, the electoral results created political chaos. The Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujib and dedicated to securing greater regional autonomy for East Pakistan, completely dominated the election in the East, and won enough seats in the West to gain control of the National Assembly. With Mujib thus to become Prime Minister, autonomy for the East became a very real possibility.²

Faced with the prospect of national disintegration, the Pakistani military retreated from its previous position of willingness to return political control to civilian hands.

¹Robert Laporte, "Pakistan in 1971: The Disintegration of a Nation," Asian Survey, XII, No. 2 (February, 1972), 99.

²U.S. State Department official. Embassy briefing, Islamabad, 11 March, 1972.

This led to the outbreak of riots in Dacca and elsewhere in East Pakistan, and clashes between the military and civilians, resulting in more than three hundred deaths during January and February. On 1 March, Yahya Khan announced a postponement of the first meeting of the new National Assembly, which had been scheduled for the following day. On 7 March, Sheikh Mujib responded to Yahya's move with further demands for East Pakistani autonomy falling just short of complete independence. Although intensive discussions between Yahya and Mujib during subsequent weeks generated rumors that a tentative accord had been reached, the situation in the East deteriorated rapidly. On the night of 25 March, the military was ordered to move in force to put down what Yahya Khan described as an "armed rebellion."³ The following day, Yahya branded Mujib a traitor, banned the Awami League and ordered the army to restore the authority of the Government in East Pakistan. Heavy fighting ensued as the military moved swiftly and ruthlessly to crush all resistance and restore order throughout East Bengal.⁴

Events now moved quickly to transform what had begun as a domestic political problem in Pakistan into a crisis which threatened the stability of the subcontinent and

³Laporte, "Pakistan in 1971", pp. 100-102.

⁴Kalim Siddiqui, Conflict, Crisis and War in Pakistan (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), p. 202.

directly involved the interests of India, the Soviet Union and China.

Indian and Soviet Reactions

On 28 March, the Indian Parliament opened debate on the Pakistan situation. Support for the East Bengali rebels was unanimous among India's political parties, and even Mrs. Gandhi's own Congress Party called for immediate recognition of Bangla Desh. Foreign Minister Swaran Singh accused Islamabad of "nothing but naked barbarism." On the 31st of March, Parliament unanimously approved a resolution demanding the immediate cessation of the use of force and "the massacre of defenceless people" by the Pakistan government. The resolution further called on the peoples and governments of the world to prevail upon Pakistan to put an end to the "genocide" in East Bengal. That Mrs. Gandhi had resisted the emotional appeals for recognition of Bangla Desh and active Indian support for the rebellion was evident, however, when in a statement on 4 April, she remarked that India had never interfered in another country's internal affairs, and that Indians should keep their emotions in check and try to be constructive.⁵ Clearly, Mrs. Gandhi was not willing at that time to risk the almost certain military confrontation with Islamabad, and the possible intervention of China on Pakistan's

⁵T.J.S. George, "Bangla Desh and the Generals," Far Eastern Economic Review, LXXII, No. 15 (10 April, 1971), 5-7.

behalf, that a declaration of full support or recognition of Bangla Desh would have precipitated.

The Soviet reaction to the events in East Pakistan, expressed in a letter from President Podgorny to Yahya Khan on 2 April, was also relatively restrained. While expressing concern over the "arrest and persecution" of Sheikh Mujib, and making an "insistent appeal for the adoption of the most immediate measures to stop the bloodshed and repression" in East Pakistan, the Soviet leader placed greatest emphasis on stressing that the situation "can and must be solved by political means, without the use of force."⁶

The official Pakistani response to India and the Soviet Union was both swift and predictable. Yahya Khan accused India of "meddling in Pakistani internal affairs," and, in an April 5th reply to President Podgorny, warned him that "for any power to support such moves (by India) or condone them would be a negation of the United Nations Charter as well as the Bandung principles."⁷

China's Dilemma: Ideological Orthodoxy or National Interests?

China faced a difficult decision. The very fact that,

⁶Pravda, 4 April, 1971, p. 1, cited in The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, XXIII, No. 14 (4 May, 1971), 36.

⁷"Pakistan is Determined Not to Allow Any Country to Interfere in Pakistan's Internal Affairs," Peking Review, No. 16, 16 April, 1971, 8-9.

after Yahya moved on 25 March to quell the rebellion, more than two weeks passed before a positive Chinese declaration of intent was made indicates that considerable debate may have taken place in Peking.

Options and Constraints

There is, of course, no way to know precisely what alternative courses of action were discussed in Peking. Still, based on an assumption of what constituted China's world view in early 1971, it is likely that four principal options were considered by the Chinese leaders. First, they could choose to do nothing. This alternative would have the advantage of minimizing chances of making the wrong decision in what much have appeared as a situation in which the potential risks to Chinese interests were great no matter which course was chosen. On the other hand, a refusal by China to take any action would almost certainly have won for Peking the enmity of both the Pakistan government and the Bengali rebels, while leaving the way open for India and the Soviet Union to exert a maximum degree of pressure on Pakistan in order to achieve a solution which would be most beneficial to their interests.

Secondly, China could elect to withhold support for either side while calling for United Nations action or the convening of an international conference to resolve the situation. This course would serve to reinforce the image that China had sought to project, since the Cultural Revolution,

of a stable member of the world community, willing to work toward her goals through normal diplomatic means rather than through support for world revolution. Aware, too, that their chances for United Nations membership had already been improved through the success of Peking's new diplomatic initiatives, China's leaders may well have reasoned that this approach to the crisis on the subcontinent would give added impetus to their drive for acceptance by the world body. Undoubtedly mitigating against the adoption of this alternative, however, was the knowledge that the Soviet Union would veto in the Security Council any solution to the problem which was not in the best interests of India. Then, too, in light of China's recent expression of support for Pakistan,⁸ such a move on Peking's part would probably be considered by Islamabad to be a stab in the back. Thus, it would differ very little from the option of doing nothing, for its ultimate blow to Peking's ideological credibility as the principal source of support for wars of national liberation would be the same.

While certain external factors undoubtedly appeared

⁸A congratulatory message from Chou En-lai to President Yahya Khan on Pakistan's Independence Day, 22 March, 1971, had expressed China's "resolute support" for "the Pakistan government and people in their just struggle to safeguard national independence and oppose foreign aggression and interference." NCNA, 22 March, 1971, cited in SCMP, 71-13 (29 March-2 April, 1971), 205.

in the minds of Chinese decision-makers as constituting constraints on their adoption of any of the options under consideration, it seems likely that these constraints would have exerted their greatest influence on a decision by Peking to adopt a position of positive support for either of the two sides in the conflict. For that reason, each of the two options presumably remaining to the PRC - support the Bengali independence movement, or support the Pakistani government - will be discussed in relation to the constraints on the adoption of that policy which most likely were perceived by Peking.

As noted previously, China saw very real advantages to the relationship which it had cultivated with Pakistan since the early 1960's. If the PRC were now to opt for support of the Bengali rebels, these close ties would be threatened - if not broken - and China would lose a great deal of its flexibility in South Asia vis-a-vis India and the Soviet Union.

Secondly, support of a revolutionary movement against an established government, no matter how "reactionary" that government might be, very likely would make it appear to many that China had reverted to her former policy of fomenting revolt and subversion, or even that there never had actually been a moderation of the Maoist extremism which had

antagonized so many governments during the Cultural Revolution. Such a reaction would obviously work to the detriment of Peking's post-1969 policy of seeking normal state-to-state relations - her "revolutionary diplomacy" - and thus would detract from the growing movement for China's entry into the United Nations.

Finally, and as a concomitant of the consideration above, Peking probably felt that support for a revolutionary movement directed against an ally of the United States would endanger her efforts to move toward a detente with Washington. A closer relation with the United States was desired by Peking in order to counter the growing Soviet threat.⁹ It might also serve to check what Peking feared was a revival of Japanese militarism bent on reoccupying Taiwan.¹⁰ The reaction of Washington to any apparent move by the PRC toward a more radical foreign policy stance was, therefore, a factor which Peking could not afford to disregard.

On the other hand, if China opted for support of the Pakistan government, she would inevitably be criticized by

⁹Strategic Survey, 1971 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1972.), p. 54.

¹⁰"Japanese Militarists' Ambitions to Reoccupy China's Territory Taiwan Revealed," NCNA, 19 March, 1971, in SCMP, 71-13 (29 March-2 April, 1971), 82.

Moscow on ideological grounds for siding with "U.S. imperialism" and the reactionary military regime in Islamabad against the "people's war" of national liberation in East Pakistan. This was a risk that could not be taken lightly by the Chinese, for whom the claim to Marxist-Leninist ideological orthodoxy was central to its bid for leadership of the world communist movement. Not only would such a move expose Peking to Soviet criticism, but world opinion, too, would be harsh on the P.C. if it were to openly ally itself with those whose brutality in East Bengal was already bringing opprobrium to the Pakistani cause. In an editorial on 3 April, the respected Far Eastern Economic Review had already warned of such a reaction when it commented on the "bloodbath" in East Bengal:

. . . all reports indicate that the army of West Pakistan has brutally imposed its will on the people of the East in a cynical operation tragically reminiscent of the Soviet Red Army's crushing of Czechoslovakia . . . Peking must now weigh the fact that it is in danger of condoning the militarist crushing of a popular progressive movement. . .¹¹

Another factor which undoubtedly weighed heavily in China's consideration of possible courses of action was the growing Soviet military threat on the Sino-Soviet border. Since the clashes along the Ussuri River and the Sinkiang border in 1969, the Soviet forces facing China had been more than doubled, and now represented more than a quarter of the entire Soviet

¹¹Editorial, Far Eastern Economic Review, LXII, No. 14 (3 April, 1971), 3.

army.¹² The threat of Moscow's seizing upon any PRC alignment with Pakistan against Bangla Desh and India as a pretext for invoking the Brezhnev Doctrine and attacking China was probably very real to Chinese decision-makers.

The PRC Decision to Support Pakistan

On 11 April the Chinese made their decision known. The People's Daily carried an article that day by a "commentator" entitled, "What Are the Indian Expansionists Trying to Do?"¹³ Although the article warned that India, "in league with the two superpowers", was "scheming for international intervention," the worst criticism was reserved for the Soviet Union. Referring to the Podgorny letter of 2 April, the article charged that the Soviet leader had "impudently criticized the Pakistan government", while posing as a friend and "pretentiously" expressing concern for the Pakistan people. "Czechoslovakia," the article continued, clearly showed "what the Soviet leadership supports, what it opposes, and on whose side, after all, it stands." The article ended with a statement of support for Pakistan which was practically identical to that made by Chou En-lai three weeks before in honor of Pakistan's Independence Day:

¹²Strategic Survey, 1971, p. 56.

¹³"Commentator" articles in the People's Daily are considered by most "China-watchers" to be pronouncements of the Party line by high officials within the PRC leadership echelon.

The Chinese government and people will as always resolutely support the Pakistan government and people in their just struggle for safeguarding national independence and state sovereignty and against foreign aggression and interference.¹⁴

In analyzing the PRC's decision, it might prove useful to try to determine the reasons why Peking acted in the face of those constraints which were discussed above.

First, the threat of increased Soviet pressure on the sensitive Sino-Soviet border areas solely in response to a Chinese declaration of support for Pakistan probably appeared remote in the absence of any actual intervention by outside forces in the fighting in East Bengal. In April, though, despite the fact that Yahya Khan had expressed his concern over Indian troop movements, the conflicts - both political and military - still remained confined to Pakistan.¹⁵ The fact that the degree of support for Pakistan expressed in Peking's statement of 11 April remained essentially unchanged from that of 22 March, although the situation confronting Islamabad had worsened markedly, may well have resulted, in part at least, from a desire on the part of the PRC to indicate to the Soviet Union that Chinese support for Pakistan would be limited.

¹⁴NCNA, 11 April, 1971, in SCMP, 71-16 (19-23 April, 1971), 109.

¹⁵Peking Review, No. 16, 16 April, 1971, 9.

To the PRC, the loss of ground to the Soviet Union in their continuing struggle to establish the orthodoxy of their respective ideological positions in the world communist movement must have seemed a certainty if China were to come out in support of Pakistan. As was undoubtedly anticipated in Peking, Moscow did not pass up the chance, and accused China of hypocrisy and ideological back-sliding:

The camouflage fell from the Peking leaders, who claim leadership of the Third World, but in fact betrayed the seventy-five million people of East Pakistan in their fight for freedom. . . the true face of the Peking claimants to the ideological and other leadership of the peoples of Asia and Africa is coming to light! . . . The Maoist group is guided not by the interests of the developing countries and their peoples, but solely by its hegemonistic ambitions, for the sake of which it is prepared to join the most shameful combinations. For their sake it is prepared to sacrifice the destinies of whole nations. . . The Maoist leadership, discarding all masks, has taken the side of the imperialists and their reactionary stooges in the developing countries.¹⁶

But as was seen in Chapter IV, strict adherence to ideological orthodoxy has not always been a major consideration in determining the direction of Peking's foreign policy line. Since 1969, support for wars of national liberation had, for the most part, been secondary to the PRC's desire to improve her international position through a reliance on traditional diplomacy. From the first of the year through 10 April - the day before Peking's statement on the

¹⁶"Peking and The Third World," Soviet Military Review, No. 3 (March, 1972), 52-53.

Pakistan situation - this approach had reaped substantial dividends. Diplomatic relations were established for the first time between China and four non-communist countries, and trade or commercial agreements were signed with nine others.¹⁷ Nor did China's support for the military regime in Islamabad indicate a complete renunciation by Peking of support for revolutionary or "anti-imperialist" struggles. In the month bracketing the PRC statement on Pakistan, there was a fresh outpouring of expressions of "solidarity" and support for revolutionary movements. These included a statement honoring the second anniversary of the Maoist "New People's Army" in the Philippines,¹⁸ a statement pledging "firm support" of the Palestine Liberation Organization,¹⁹ and an optimistic and encouraging appraisal of the anti-imperialist and revolutionary struggles in Guinea, Angola and Mozambique.²⁰

Finally, the opportunity to take advantage of the close Indo-Soviet ties to charge both countries with complicity in an

¹⁷"Chronology of Events in Mainland China," Current Scene, IX, Nos. 2-5 (February-May, 1971), 21.

¹⁸"Philippine New People's Army Statement on Its Second Anniversary," Peking Review, No. 17, 23 April, 1971, 14.

¹⁹NCNA, 3 May, 1971, in SCMP, 71-19 (10-14 May, 1971), 212.

²⁰"African National Liberation Movement," Peking Review, No. 15, 9 April, 1971, 19.

"imperialistic" plot to interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign state, and thus to advance its own ambitions vis-a-vis both New Delhi and Moscow for leadership of the Third World, probably appeared to Peking to be an acceptable trade-off for any ideological ground she might lose by failure to support the Bengali rebels.

Numerous other considerations, both domestic and external, were almost sure to have influenced the Chinese decision. Several which may have been significant are briefly discussed below.

First, China's continuing hostility towards India over the still unresolved border issue, suspicion of Indo-Soviet aims in South Asia, and a desire to gain political capital, at India's expense, with the established governments of the Third World (none of whom, presumably, would be very happy to see the PRC once again actively fomenting and supporting revolution) all must have influenced Peking's decision. Somewhat related to this last point could be a desire on the part of Peking not to encourage any separatist movement on the periphery of China which might adversely affect her ability to maintain stability among the minorities of Tibet. Finally, China may have considered that her observance of a policy of "non-interference in the internal affairs of another country" might eventually facilitate her

recovery of Taiwan. At a time when momentum was building for admission of the PRC to the United Nations, Peking may have felt that by strict adherence to this principle, she might add strength to her assertion that the fate of Taiwan was an internal matter which only China could decide. If, by doing so, she could bring about even an implicit commitment to the principle of "non-interference" by at least those nations which supported her United Nations membership, then Peking might thus be able to isolate Taiwan and perhaps even generate enough international pressure to force a complete withdrawal from the island by the United States.

In summary, though, the most compelling reasons for China's decision to support Pakistan were alluded to by the Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister, Han Nien-lung, at a banquet on 21 May, 1971, celebrating the twentieth anniversary of Sino-Pakistan relations. Han expressed the thanks of the Chinese government and people to Pakistan for "upholding friendship with China in defiance of foreign pressure, firmly opposing the plot to create 'two Chinas', and actively supporting the restoration of China's legitimate rights in the United Nations."²¹ China had benefited in the past from Pakistan's support, rendered in the face of pressure from the United States and the Soviet Union, not only in her

²¹NCNA, 22 May, 1971, in SCMP, 71-72 (1-4 June, 1971), 109.

efforts to enter the United Nations and recover Taiwan, but also in her confrontations with India. Now, with Indo-Soviet ties apparently becoming closer daily, China undoubtedly felt the need to maintain the best possible relationship with Pakistan in order to preserve her freedom of maneuver on the subcontinent and counter India's growing military strength and the Soviet Union's increasing influence. Thus, national interest apparently eclipsed ideological considerations at this juncture in the course of Chinese foreign policy formulation.

APRIL-NOVEMBER, 1971: FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHINESE POSITION

After its 11 April statement, Peking largely eschewed public comment on the situation in Bangla Desh until about mid-November, when events clearly began to move toward war. Several events which occurred between April and November, 1971, and a number of situations which evolved during that period are worth examining closely, however, for without doubt they influenced China's choice of a course of action once war between India and Pakistan broke out in December.

Sino-Pakistan relations

China's relations with Pakistan during the period were remarkable if for no other reason than that they did not appear to undergo either a significant qualitative or quantitative change following China's declaration of support.

The Chinese new media were largely devoid of any mention of the East Pakistan situation itself, although the normal comments concerning the comings and goings of various Chinese and Pakistani delegations were seen. These occasions were often taken advantage of by various Chinese officials to reaffirm China's support for Pakistan. The statements were consistently the same, and always echoed the 11 April declaration. A minor variation regarding Kashmir appeared on 21 May in Peking, when the Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister declared in a speech:

The Chinese government and people have consistently given firm support to the Pakistan government and people in their just struggle to safeguard state sovereignty and independence and oppose foreign aggression and interference, and firmly support the people of Kashmir in their just struggle for the right to self-determination. [emphasis added]²²

This renewed support for the Pakistani position on Kashmir may have been the result of a request by Islamabad, or else an attempt by Peking to compensate for an inability, or unwillingness, to render more substantive assistance. In any event, it appears that by the end of May it had become the official line, for hardly a week after the Peking speech, an official in Sinkiang repeated the statement practically word for word on the occasion of the signing of a border

²²NCNA, 22 May, 1971, in SCMP, 71-22 (1-4 June, 1971), 109.

trade agreement between the two countries.²³

Chinese economic assistance continued at a consistently high level. In mid-May, the PRC extended an interest-free loan of \$20.7 million to Pakistan, bringing the total of Chinese pledges to \$307 million.²⁴ The border trade agreement signed on 29 May unofficially reopened the historic "silk route" to China, and provided the PRC with a land route from Sinkiang to Karachi by way of a three hundred-eighty mile black-topped road from the Chinese border to Thakot, West Pakistan, which was built with Chinese aid.²⁵ Other Chinese economic assistance included an agreement on the construction of a sugar mill,²⁶ and the presentation of the Pakistan branch of the Bank of China to the Pakistan government.²⁷

What military assistance was provided by the PRC during this period before the war is difficult to determine as neither Peking nor Islamabad publicized this aspect of their

²³NCNA, 29 May, 1971, in SCMP, 71-23 (7-11 June, 1971), 147.

²⁴New York Times, 16 May, 1971. p. 10, col. 1.

²⁵New York Times, 20 May, 1971.

²⁶NCNA, 1 May, 1971, in SCMP, 71-19 (10-14 May, 1971), 158.

²⁷NCNA, 5 August, 1971, in SCMP, 71-33 (18-20 August, 1971), 129.

relationship. On 18 September, a North Korean ship arrived at Karachi, however, and was reported by "well-informed sources" to be carrying a consignment of Chinese arms for the Pakistani military.²⁸

Overall, and despite the worsening situation in East Pakistan, the affairs of the subcontinent did not appear to be of primary concern to Peking during this period. As an example, except for the period of the Indo-Pakistan war itself, and including the period of the initial crisis in East Pakistan in late March and early April, the official Chinese news agency coverage of relations between the PRC and Rumania consistently exceeded the combined total of that devoted to relations between the PRC and Pakistan, and the PRC and India.²⁹

China's diplomatic initiatives

The effectiveness of Peking's "revolutionary diplomacy" continued. Between 11 April and the end of September, four more countries - Togo, Turkey, Sierra Leone and Austria - agreed to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC. Constantly seeking to broaden its base of support among the non-communist nations, Peking's economic assistance to these countries kept pace with her diplomatic offensive. The flow

²⁸New York Times, 15 October, 1971. p. 3, col. 5.

²⁹Current Background, 71-03 (July-September, 1971), and Current Background, 72-6 (17-23 March, 1972), entire issues.

of aid was highly diversified. Trade or economic assistance agreements were concluded with countries with which China had no diplomatic ties, those - like Burma and Yugoslavia - with whom relations had formerly been hostile, as well as countries with whom relations had been relative cordial; a total of fourteen in all between 11 April and the end of September.³⁰

Another example during this period of the pragmatic approach to foreign policy which resulted in the PRC putting national interests above ideology was Peking's response to the Maoist-type revolution which broke out in April in Ceylon. China immediately coupled denials of any part in the uprising with pledges of support for the Bandaranaike government, and an interest-free loan of \$25 million.³¹ Since Moscow, too, had opted for support of the Ceylon government, and was providing jet aircraft and technicians to fight the rebels, Peking's move may very well have been prompted by a desire to counter any further expansion of Soviet influence in South Asia.³²

³⁰New York Times, 5 March, 1972.

³¹"Red Giants Battle Over Asia," U.S. News and World Report, 20 September, 1971, p. 44.

³²B.H.S. Jayewardene, "Wooing the Rebels," Far Eastern Economic Review, No. 18 (1 May, 1971), 8.

Support for revolutionary movements

As has already been noted, Peking's support for "revolutionary struggle" during this period was rendered only very selectively, and then was usually very low-key. In a May Day editorial, however, the People's Daily reaffirmed Peking's support, in principle, for revolutionary movements:

. . . The Chinese people who have won liberation will never forget all the people in the world who are struggling to win their liberation and to defend their independence and freedom. To forget them means betrayal. It is our glorious bounden internationalist duty to give support and assistance to the people of various countries.³³

The reference to "various countries", as opposed to "all" countries, may have been due to a vagary of translation. The possibility that it was a deliberate caveat, however, should not be overlooked, especially in light of China's demonstrated willingness to pass up those "people's wars" which she determined were not in her best interest to support.

In some cases, Peking was able to continue her pursuit of ideological goals by means of subversion and the clandestine support of local communist movements while taking concurrent steps on the diplomatic plane to increase her influence with the government of the country involved. An

³³Editorial, People's Daily, 30 April, 1971, in CR, 71-12 (18-23 August, 1971), 170.

example of this dual approach has already been discussed in the case of Burma. A further indication that Peking's reluctance to support the Bengali independence movement did not portend a lessening of her desire to back revolutions in cases where such action would not jeopardize her diplomatic initiatives, was China's relations with Malaysia. During the spring and summer of 1971, relations between the two countries improved considerably. Trade delegations were exchanged, commercial agreements which benefited Malaysia's faltering rubber industry were signed, and it was expected that the two governments would soon establish normal diplomatic relations.³⁴ But even as these developments were occurring, the PRC was encouraging the activities of the Communist Party of Malaya. On 28 April, during the visit to Peking of the Malaysian trade delegation, the "Voice of Malayan Revolution," a radio station believed to have recently started operations in southern China, broadcast an editorial which urged the people of Malaysia to:

. . . give vigorous support to the people's army - the Malayan National Liberation Army, establish and develop militia organizations, further develop the people's war, continuously wipe out the effectives in the enemy's counter-revolutionary armed forces and exert unremitting effort for the seizure of political power in the whole country.³⁵

³⁴New York Times, 24 October, 1971, p. 1, col. 4.

³⁵NCNA, 1 May, 1971, in SCMP, 71-19 (10-14 May, 1971), 150.

It seems reasonable at this point, given the PRC's use of the tactic in at least two other cases, to ask whether China might not also have intended to covertly support the revolutionary movement in East Pakistan while rendering vocal moral and diplomatic support to the Pakistani government in the West.

The Communist movement in East Bengal

If China intended clandestinely to back the independence movement in the East, there were two separate leftist organizations through which it could logically work. One of these, the National Awami Party (NAP), was a well-organized peasant movement under the leadership of Maulana Bashani. Its political character was very similar to that of India's CPI (M), and in April, 1971, it was pro-Peking. At the outset, however, it was perhaps more likely that Peking would have chosen to back the second group. Closely akin to the Naxalites across the border in West Bengal, whom the PRC was already supporting, the East Pakistan Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) (EPCP-ML) was a radical Maoist organization, and possessed a well-developed underground network. Unlike the NAP, however, it distrusted Sheikh Mujib as an "American agent" and a class enemy.³⁶

³⁶T.J.S. George, "The Bloody Road Leftwards," Far Eastern Economic Review, No. 16 (17 April, 1971), 5.

Convincing evidence of any Chinese plan to support either of these groups is difficult to detect. One factor which lends credence to the possibility, however, is the lack of criticism of any of the leftist Bengali organizations in the Chinese media. Also, the London Daily Telegram reported that Chinese arms were being shipped into East Pakistan across the eleven mile-wide Siliguri salient between Nepal and East Bengal.³⁷ For the PRC to have adopted a policy of supplying arms to the Bengali rebels through Nepal from Tibet does not seem likely, however, given the difficult terrain over which such shipments would have to be made - both into Tibet and through Nepal - and the quantity of arms that would have to be supplied in order for their effect to be felt. It seems almost certain, too, that such shipments would eventually be discovered by the Pakistani authorities, thus negating any advantages which China may have hoped to gain by professing its support for the government in Islamabad.

Another factor which would have mitigated against China's willingness to covertly support the EPCP-ML was the fact that that organization's opposition to Mujib resulted in the loss of a great deal of its popular support. Even the Naxalites became disillusioned with the Party's Maoist

³⁷T.J.S. George, "East Pakistan: China's Lost Chance," Far Eastern Economic Review, No. 51 (18 December, 1971), 8.

emphasis on "class struggle", to the detriment of the fight for "liberation," and many deserted the Communist ranks to join the NAP and other moderate groups.³⁸

Finally, an argument can be made against covert Chinese support to the revolution in East Pakistan based on the statements of the leader of the pro-Peking NAP when, in a telegram sent to Chou En-lai in late April, he urged the PRC to accord immediate recognition to the "republican government of Bangla Desh," and to halt all arms shipments to West Pakistan. If China refused to protest at "the atrocities of the military junta," he charged, "the world may think you are not the friend of the oppressed."³⁹ To thus attack Peking on her most vulnerable flank would not seem to be an approach chosen by a man who was receiving shipments of arms and ammunition from Tibet.

If it was true, then, that China had no intention of assisting the rebels in any way, what might her perception have been of the eventual outcome of the Bangla Desh independence movement? It is quite possible that Peking expected a long, drawn-out struggle to ensue between the Bangalis and the West Pakistani forces. Fears that such

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹"Far East Round-Up," Far Eastern Economic Review, No. 18 (1 May, 1971), 4.

a "protracted war" would lead to a takeover of the independence movement by communist extremists were expressed in both Bangla Desh and India.⁴⁰ If Peking too, believed that the revolutionary movement in East Bengal would eventually come under leftist or communist leadership, she may very well have counted on a future opportunity to create turmoil in an independent Bangla Desh and neighboring West Bengal through renewed support to the Naxalites, or other communist groups, without then risking her relationship with Islamabad. As expressed by one high-ranking Indian officer:

Once leadership in East Bengal passes to the extremists' hands, as is already happening, East and West Bengal, inspired by China, may become an enlarged Bangla Desh. China would then wield great influence in these two regions.⁴¹

The Indo-Soviet Treaty

On 9 August, 1971, India and the Soviet Union signed a twenty-year treaty of "peace, friendship and cooperation." While it was not a formal military alliance, the treaty did contain several clauses which had military implications. Article VIII stipulated that neither party would commit aggression against the other, nor permit the use of its territory

⁴⁰"Putting Up on Front," Far Eastern Economic Review, No. 17 (24 April, 1971), 5.

⁴¹Lt. Gen. B. M. Kaul (Ret.), Deccan Chronicle (Bangalore), 13 July, 1971, cited in: Bhabani Sen Gupta, "Indian Communism and the Peasantry," Problems of Communism, January-February, 1972, p. 17.

by a third country for the purpose of inflicting military damage on the other. Article X further prohibited either country from entering into any obligation with another state or states "which might cause military damage to the other party." For India's purposes, however, Article IX contained the key clauses:

Each High Contracting Party undertakes to abstain from providing any assistance to any third country that engages in armed conflict with the other Party. In the event of either Party being subjected to an attack or a threat thereof, the High Contracting Parties shall immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to remove such threat and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and the security of their countries.⁴²

Thus, India was assured that in the event of war, or threat of war, on the subcontinent, all Soviet assistance to Pakistan would cease. Perhaps of greater importance was the fact that although no requirement for automatic military assistance existed, China had been put on notice that in the event of hostilities, the "security" of India, by treaty, became an immediate concern of the Soviet Union.

The timing of the signing of the treaty is significant, for it indicates the extent of India's fear and distrust of China's intentions. According to an Indian

⁴²Maharaj K. Chopra, "The Indo-Soviet Treaty and Its Implications," Military Review, December, 1971, p. 24.

official in Moscow, the treaty had been negotiated two years before (apparently in response to Brezhnev's proposal in June of 1969 for an Asian collective security system), but the decision to sign had been prompted within the preceding two weeks by Indian fears of a Pakistani attack backed by Chinese arms and supplies.⁴³ The Kissinger visit to Peking from Pakistan in July, with its overtones of a possible convergence of American, Pakistani and Chinese interests on the subcontinent, probably also contributed to New Delhi's desire to move closer to the Soviet Union at this time.

The signing of the treaty resulted in an accelerated delivery of Soviet arms to India. This was due, in part, to new purchases by New Delhi, and partly to a speed-up in the shipment of equipment already purchased. Visits to New Delhi of high-ranking Soviet officials become a frequent occurrence, and each delegation brought with it new pledges of continued strong Soviet support for the Indian position.⁴⁴ Despite the obvious willingness of the Soviets to meet all of India's defense needs, however, there appeared to be a positive effort on the part of Moscow to caution India against any move, such as the premature recognition of Bangla Desh, which might provoke an attack by Pakistan. By publicly urging India to use

⁴³New York Times, 14 August, 1971. p. 6, col. 1.

⁴⁴New York Times, 9 November, 1971. p. 13, col. 1.

restraint, and simultaneously giving full but quiet support to New Delhi's clandestine activities in support of the Bengali rebels, Moscow apparently hoped to preserve at least a vestige of its influence with the Pakistan government, and at the same time, enable India to achieve a political victory without the risk of war.⁴⁵

The purge of Lin Piao

On the night of 12 September, 1971, a Chinese Air Force aircraft crashed in Outer Mongolia, possibly while attempting to defect to Soviet Siberia. After months of rumor, it was finally "confirmed" by the Chinese in July, 1972, that Lin Piao and other high-ranking Politburo members died in the crash. It was charged that they were fleeing to the Soviet Union after having plotted the death of Mao Tse-tung.⁴⁶ Whether or not this charge is true, or was an attempt by Mao to justify the purge of Lin and others who opposed him, is not possible to determine at this time. It is generally accepted, however, that a major purge of military leaders did take place during the late summer and early fall of 1971, and that Lin Piao was its principal victim.

Others, all members of the ruling Politburo, included

⁴⁵New York Times, 24 October, 1971, p. 6, col. 1.

⁴⁶"Associated Press News Analysis," Topeka Daily Capital, 29 July, 1971, p. 8, col. 1.

the Chief of Staff, the Air Force Commander, the Navy's Political Commissar, the director of military logistics and Lin's wife.⁴⁷ According to Ralph Powell, author of several highly-regarded works on the Chinese military, a major element of the conflict which led to the purge apparently was the disagreement of many military leaders with the decision of Mao and Chou to seek a detente with the United States. Powell suggests that Lin and the others may for ideological reasons have preferred a detente with the Soviet Union to one with the capitalistic United States. Because of the buildup of Soviet forces on the Chinese border, they may also have believed that such a move would make more sense from a military standpoint.⁴⁸

Whatever the cause may have been, the effect of an internal crisis of this magnitude can be imagined. Not only had the top military leadership been removed, but key Party posts, too, had been vacated. Possibly indicating fear of a reaction by military elements loyal to the Lin group, or of further attempts to defect, the Air Force was grounded on 13 September and did not resume operations for more than a month.⁴⁹ It is probable, however, that several more months

⁴⁷Strategic Survey, 1971, p. 58.

⁴⁸Ralph L. Powell, "The Military and the Struggle for Power in China," Current History, Vol. 63, No. 373 (September, 1972), 101.

⁴⁹Ibid.

were to pass before the political reliability of the Indians was no longer suspect.

Sino-Soviet Relations

By early September it was becoming apparent that the Indo-Soviet treaty was only a part of a larger Soviet diplomatic offensive which appeared to be aimed at countering the growth of Chinese influence in certain areas. From August through October Soviet leaders visited Canada, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Bulgaria, the Scandinavian countries, France, Algeria, Iran, India and North Vietnam, and the Indian and West German leaders visited Moscow.⁵⁰

Accompanying the Soviet diplomatic moves was a series of long and almost daily attacks on China - particularly the army and the "militarization of Chinese society" - in the Soviet press. There were reports, too, that the border talks that were begun in Peking in October, 1969, had broken down.⁵¹

The attacks on China in the press came to an abrupt halt, however, in mid-September, and no further comment was made on PRC internal affairs until late in November - just

⁵⁰New York Times, 12 September, 1971. Sec. IV, p. 3, col. 4.

⁵¹Ibid.

before war broke out on the subcontinent.⁵² That the halt in Soviet criticism of China and the purge of Lin Biao and other high-ranking Chinese military leaders occurred at approximately the same time is unlikely to be coincidental. Moscow probably wanted to wait and see what changes, if any, would result from the turmoil in Peking before committing herself further.

In a 1 October article greeting the PRC on the occasion of its twenty-second anniversary, Pravda called for the "normalization of state relations" between the two countries, a restoration of friendly relations, and for unity of effort "in the struggle against the forces of international imperialism and reaction." The article concluded by emphasizing that an improvement of relations "would meet the vital interests of the People's Republic of China and the U.S.S.R."⁵³ The conciliatory tone of the Soviet statement may indicate that it was intended to test the attitude of the reshuffled leadership in Peking. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the Soviets were attempting to reassure the Chinese that the visit of President Podgorny to New Delhi during that same time did not portend any joint Indo-Soviet action timed to take

⁵²New York Times, 14 November, 1971, p. 13, col. 1.

⁵³NCNA, 2 October, 1971, in SCMP, 71-14 (12-15 October, 1971), 214.

advantage of the de-stabilized situation in China created by the events of mid-September.

On the Chinese side, there was practically no mention of the Soviet Union in the press from August through mid-November. Not even the signing of the Indo-Soviet treaty in August evoked comment by Peking. It was not until 6 December, after war had broken out between India and Pakistan, that the PRC commented publicly on the New Delhi-Moscow alliance. The Chinese statement leaves no doubt that Peking believed that the treaty was designed to enhance the position of the Soviet Union in South Asia at China's expense:

. . . Social-imperialism signed a treaty with India a few months ago which is in essence a treaty of military alliance. . . The purpose of social-imperialism's active meddling is to strengthen its control over India. . . and to expand its sphere of influence in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent.⁵⁴

Peking's apparent reluctance to comment on the Indo-Soviet treaty until the outbreak of hostilities in December is difficult to understand. She certainly must have been immediately suspicious of this first successful step in what China was convinced was a Soviet scheme to encircle her through means of a Soviet-dominated Asian collective

⁵⁴NCNA, 6 December, 1971, in SCMP, 71-50 (13-17 December, 1971), 165.

security system.⁵⁵ However, the belated Chinese comment, and also the general lack of criticism of the Soviet Union during this period, is probably related to the Lin Biao affair. It is reasonable to assume that the political instability and military leadership crisis engendered by the purges of the summer and early fall made Peking hesitant to undertake any action which might lead the Soviet Union to increase pressure on the Chinese border.

The PRC enters the United Nations

On 25 October, the United Nations General Assembly voted to seat the PRC and expel the Republic of China. The Peking delegation arrived in New York on 11 November. The United Nations vote was a clearcut victory for China's efforts to strengthen its international position and prestige. The Chinese leaders no doubt also felt that they had increased their flexibility vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, for the open forum of the United Nations provided a new arena in which to engage the communist "superpower" short of armed confrontation.

But China's membership in the world body meant that

⁵⁵On the same day as the first mention of the Indo-Soviet treaty in People's Daily, the chief PRC United Nations delegate, Huang Hua, denounced the Soviet Union for attempting to "gain control over the subcontinent" in an effort to "encircle" China. NCNA, 6 December, 1971, in SCMP, 71-50 (13-17 December, 1971), 167.

the converse was also true, for after 11 November every move by Peking was subject to immediate and public attack by the Soviet Union before the assembled delegates of the Third World countries, for whose loyalty and support the two communist powers were contending. Thus, after finally being accorded what she considered to be her rightful status as a world power, Peking perhaps may have felt that the relative freedom of action in the international arena which she had enjoyed before as an "outlaw" nation had been somewhat reduced as a result.

Sino-Indian relations

Following the attacks on India in the Chinese media which were made in conjunction with the PRC's declaration of support for Pakistan in April, there was little in the way of Chinese actions, or in news releases from Peking, that would indicate a desire on the part of China to improve relations between the two countries.

On the Indian side, however, several positive steps were taken in an apparent effort to improve Sino-Indian relations. In July, Prime Minister Gandhi sent a long letter to Premier Chou En-lai, explaining India's position on the East Pakistan crisis and offering to hold talks on the issue. Although no response was received from Peking, talks were held, at India's initiative, in Moscow between the Indian and Chinese ambassadors. Whether the subject of these discus-

cussions was the situation on the subcontinent or the status of relations between New Delhi and Peking is not known. It became clear by early September, however, that India had offered to send an ambassador to Peking. There was no indication, though, that the PRC had made a reciprocal move.⁵⁶

By mid-November, the Indian mission in Peking was reported to have conveyed to New Delhi Chinese assurances that the posting of an Indian ambassador to Peking would be reciprocated by the PRC. Whether or not this was truly Peking's intention is not certain, although India appeared to have been convinced that it was. Reports circulated that the Indian Government was planning to re-establish communications, including an air link between Peking and New Delhi, soon after the exchange of ambassadors. Foreign Minister Swaran Singh, after admitting in Parliament that "there is a greater likelihood of the missions in Peking and New Delhi being upgraded and ambassadors appointed now," revealed that India was also exploring the possibility of renewing trade and cultural relations with China.⁵⁷

As tensions mounted on the subcontinent, leading to the outbreak of war two weeks later, talk in New Delhi of a

⁵⁶New York Times, 10 September, 1971, p. 8, col. 1.

⁵⁷New York Times, 19 November, 1971.

Sino-Indian rapprochement was forgotten. It is reasonable to assume, though, that the Indian statements must have been based on something more than wishful thinking. The advantages to China of normalizing relations with India would not have been insignificant. Such a move might possibly have led to a resolution of the border dispute which continued to generate mutual suspicion and distrust. In the wake of the Lin Piao affair, too, a rapprochement with New Delhi may have been considered by Peking as a means of removing the threat of Indian subversion on China's south flank, thereby precluding any possible necessity of committing large numbers of perhaps politically unreliable military units to maintain order in Tibet. The Indo-Soviet treaty may also have created a desire in Peking to increase its influence in New Delhi in order to counterbalance the growing Soviet presence there. With the situation worsening in East Bengal, however, any Chinese plan that may have existed to upgrade relations with India was undoubtedly set aside. To do otherwise would have completely undermined China's position of support for Pakistan at a time when that country was threatened with invasion from India.

THE SUBCONTINENT MOVES TOWARD WAR

By late October, the outlook for a peaceful resolution of the situation in East Bengal was bleak. Indian troops continued to move up toward the border at various points along

the periphery of the 1,400-mile-long frontier with East Pakistan, and crossed the border in support of activities by the Mukti Bahini (Bengali) guerrillas as early as 27 October.⁵⁸

As the prospect of military action by India in the East became evident, a Pakistani delegation of military leaders and Foreign Ministry officials led by former Foreign Minister Bhutto visited Peking from 5-8 November at the invitation of the Chinese. While there, Bhutto is reported to have discussed with the PRC's United Nations delegation ways in which the Security Council might handle the crisis on the subcontinent. Notwithstanding this opportunity for Pakistan to coordinate with Peking the presentation of its case before the Security Council, Bhutto's visit was likely regarded as a failure from the Pakistani viewpoint. At a banquet on 7 November, Ch'i Peng-fei stressed that disputes should be settled by consultation rather than force, and then, apparently counselling the Pakistan government to seek a political settlement of the crisis with its eastern wing, expressed his hope "that the Pakistan people will strengthen their unity and make joint efforts to overcome difficulties and solve their own problems."⁵⁹ Although Ch'i concluded

⁵⁸Strategic Survey, 1971, p. 50.

⁵⁹NCNA, 7 November, 1971, in SCMP, 71-46 (15-19 November, 1971), 116.

his speech by reiterating China's determination to "resolutely support" Pakistan if she were subjected to aggression, the overall tone of his remarks makes it appear highly unlikely that Bhutto was able to secure any stronger pledge of Chinese support than Peking had already proffered.

From mid-November on, the situation in East Pakistan moved swiftly toward war. On 18 November, Mrs. Gandhi, in a letter to U Thant, said Pakistan was "seriously preparing to launch a large-scale armed conflict with India." On the 23rd, Indian troops crossed into East Pakistan at several points, and Pakistan declared a state of emergency.⁶⁰ Then, during the night and early morning of 3-4 December, Pakistan armed forces in the West crossed the Indian border in strength. The Indian army responded with a full-scale invasion of East Pakistan. The subcontinent was at war.

The PRC: Options and Constraints

China, committed to the "support" of Pakistan, was now forced by circumstances largely beyond her control to become even more deeply enmeshed in a situation which involved her national interests, but over which she could exert little direct influence.

As viewed from Peking, the options which could

⁶⁰ M. Siddiqui, War in Pakistan, 207.

realistically be considered by China in seeking to fulfill her obligation to the government of Pakistan were probably somewhat fewer than in April. For example, the active intervention of India made Chinese support for the Bengali revolutionary movement even less attractive than it might have appeared before. In the wake of the Indian invasion of East Pakistan, such action would now be tantamount to Chinese support for India, and thus was obviously not a viable alternative.

To do nothing, i.e., to fail to render in some way the "resolute support" that had been promised in the event of "foreign aggression" would undoubtedly be regarded in Islamabad as a failure by China to honor her commitment. In Chinese eyes, this would amount to a great "loss of face" for China, not only in Pakistan, but around the world, and especially in the capitals of the Third World where a constant struggle for dominant influence was being waged with Soviet Union. For these reasons, this option must also have been rejected by Peking.

Two other possible alternatives were likely to have been discussed in Peking - the use of some form of military action, and an effort to resolve the issue through the United Nations while providing assistance to Pakistan short of the commitment of military forces.

It is probable that several factors militated against China's use of military action. First, the risk of provoking an attack by Soviet forces positioned on the Sino-Soviet border was greater than it had been in April. Even if it had not entered into an alliance with India, the Soviet Union was not likely to have permitted the defeat of India, and the almost certain shift in the balance of power on the Asian continent which would result. The signing of the Indo-Soviet treaty in August made this a certainty. A report which gave credence to the contention that Soviet forces would intervene in some manner if necessary to ensure Indian victory appeared in the New York Times on 11 January. Apparently responding to Indian fears of possible military action by China, the Soviet ambassador in New Delhi, N. M. Pegov, was reported to have assured the Indian Government that, if required, the Soviet Union "would open a diversionary action" against the Chinese.⁶¹

Another factor which undoubtedly influenced any Chinese consideration of the use of military force to exert pressure on India was the purge in the fall of Lin Biao and many of those officers in the central headquarters who were loyal to him. Not only were the top commanders eliminated, but in the following weeks a number of other senior

⁶¹New York Times, 11 January, 1972, p. 1, col. 6.

officers also disappeared. The Air Force was hit especially hard, as were the General Staff Department and the General Logistics Department.⁶² A purge of this extent must have created considerable suspicion, distrust and instability throughout the PLA, and particularly in those key elements mentioned. It is unlikely, therefore, that Peking would have been eager to undertake military operations in the distant Indian border region, or to initiate any action which might provoke a Soviet military response.

The snowbound conditions of the Himalayan passes also argued against direct Chinese intervention in East Pakistan or northeast India, but probably would not have precluded the launching of diversionary attacks against the six Indian divisions that were in position throughout the war on the Sino-Indian border in Ladakh and the North-East Frontier Agency.⁶³

Finally, China's direct participation in the war against East Pakistani independence would expose her to Soviet charges in the United Nations potentially far more damaging than those she experienced in April. Peking's continuing diplomatic offensive had paid off in United Nations membership in October, and the establishment of

⁶²Powell, "Struggle for Power in China," p. 101.

⁶³Strategic Survey, 1971, p. 49.

renewal of diplomatic relations with five more countries in October and November. Trade or commercial agreements were signed with six others.⁶⁴ To involve herself militarily now with the "imperialistic" and "reactionary" military regime in Islamabad in attempting to prevent the success of an independence movement which had won world-wide support would, perhaps, do irreparable damage to the image of "respectability" and responsibility in international affairs which Peking had strived so hard to create.

Which of these considerations weighed most heavily in Peking, and what others may have influenced her decision not to commit military forces is not known. It is known, however, that at no time during the thirteen day war were there reports of Chinese troop movements which might have indicated an intention on the part of China to intervene militarily, nor were there threats made to do so by Peking.⁶⁵

The PRC's "decision"

The policy which the PRC finally adopted was one of strong support for efforts by the United Nations to end the fighting, and the provision of limited material assistance

⁶⁴"Chronology of Events in Mainland China," Current Scene, IX, Nos. 11 and 12 (November-December, 1971), p. 21.

⁶⁵"Quarterly Chronicle and Documentation," China Quarterly, No. 49 (January-March, 1972), 197.

to Pakistan on the subcontinent. While it may appear that the adoption of this course of action was the result of a positive decision on the part of the PRC, it is more likely to have been a matter of Peking's having to make the best of the only remaining viable alternative after all others had been eliminated from consideration by the constraints acting upon them. Even so, this policy afforded Peking several significant advantages, and permitted it to minimize the losses inherent in the support of a losing cause.

First, China's recent admission to the United Nations provided Peking with an effective alternative to military action. By loudly denouncing India and the Soviet Union before the delegates of the Third World for "imperialism" and "interference in the internal affairs of another country," Peking probably could do as much for the Pakistani cause as could be achieved by the commitment of troops. Certainly China's leaders must have reasoned that the PRC's own cause would benefit far more from a resolute defense of the principles of national sovereignty and territorial integrity in the United Nations than from a dubious attempt to defend them on the battlefield at the expense of a genuine "war of national liberation."

Secondly, after experiencing China's support during its war with India over Kashmir in 1965, Pakistan most likely

was under no illusions as to the degree of assistance that the PRC was willing, or able, to provide. Peking, therefore, was probably confident that if she exerted every effort in the Security Council to bring about a cease-fire and a mutual withdrawal of forces, while continuing to provide Islamabad with the munitions it required to maintain its war effort, the Pakistanis would feel that the PRC had honored its commitment to "resolutely support" them - at least within the practical and political limitations operative on Peking.

And finally, after the launching of the Indian offensive toward Dacca on 4 December, it must have been apparent to the Chinese that whatever chance Islamabad may have had of preserving the territorial integrity of Pakistan had been lost, and that the emergence of an independent Bangla Desh was only a matter of time. Thus, by refraining from taking action in support of Pakistani forces operating in East Bengal, Peking may have hoped to preserve whatever influence she still retained among the Bengali EPCP-ML and Naxalites, and thereby maximize her future potential for instigating and supporting insurgencies throughout all of Bengal at India's expense.

Political support vs. military assistance

At this point, and in light of the PRC's oft-repeated determination to "resolutely support" the Pakistani government, it would be useful to examine in greater detail the

manner in which Peking undertook to fulfill her obligation to Islamabad after the outbreak of war on 4 December.

While the actual amount of military aid that the PRC supplied to Pakistan during the thirteen-day period of full-scale fighting was relatively small, Peking's diplomatic and political efforts on behalf of its ally were substantial. This aspect of the Chinese involvement consisted of efforts to achieve a cease-fire and withdrawal of forces, bitter denunciations before the Security Council of both India and the Soviet Union, and official charges made in Peking of Indian violations of the Chinese border and atrocities by Indian troops in East Pakistan.

On 4 December, the first day of India's offensive in the East, China's representative in the Security Council, Huang Hua, made a blistering attack on India, charging her with aggression and reiterating the PRC's position that the East Pakistan situation was "purely the internal affair of Pakistan," in which no other country had the right to interfere. Then, attacking the Indian contention that the situation in East Pakistan constituted a threat to Indian security, he said:

According to the logic of the Indian government anyone can use the pretext of 'self-defense' for invading other countries. In that case, what guarantee is there for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of various countries?

This was followed by a call for the Security Council to condemn the Indian aggression and demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Indian troops. He concluded his comments by calling on the United Nations and "the people of the world" to note that "the Indian government's current acts of aggression have been perpetrated with the support of social-imperialism" (the Soviet Union).⁶⁶

Huang's speech set the tone for the Chinese campaign in the United Nations. As the days passed, Chinese attacks on the Soviet Union became more bitter, and while strong denunciations of Indian aggression continued to be made, it appears that China's principal concern was with advancing its own ideological aims among the nations of both the Third World and the communist bloc by emphasizing the "imperialistic" nature of the Soviet Union to the former, and its "revisionist" nature to the latter.

The following day, 5 December, the PRC delegation submitted a resolution in the Security Council which called for a cease-fire and the mutual withdrawal of forces beyond national boundaries. After vetoing the Chinese resolution, and one sponsored by the United States, the Soviet Union was again attacked by the PRC representative in a speech

⁶⁶NCNA, 4 December, 1971, in Current Background, 12-4 (1 January, 1972), 4.

which condemned the Soviets for engineering a "counter-revolutionary rebellion" in China's Sinkiang province in 1962, the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, an attempt to overthrow the government of Sudan in 1971, and Moscow's Middle-East policy. Huang left little doubt that Peking viewed Soviet involvement in the affairs of South Asia as a threat to China's security:

In supporting India to provoke an armed conflict with Pakistan, the purpose of the Soviet government is to take advantage of India's inevitable dependence on the Soviet Union in the war to control the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent and the Indian Ocean and expand its sphere of influence. . . .⁶⁷

On the 6th, India recognized Bangla Desh, evoking further Chinese charges of Soviet collaboration in a plot by the Indian "expansionists" to permanently occupy East Pakistan. The PRC representative also reiterated her previous charge that the ultimate goal of the Soviet Union was the encirclement of China.⁶⁸

After three Soviet vetoes had blocked passage of a cease-fire resolution in the Security Council, the General Assembly took up the issue on the 7th, and voted

⁶⁷New York Times, 5 December, 1971, p. 1, col. 5; NCNA, 5 December, 1971, in Current Background, 72-4 (7 February, 1972), 6.

⁶⁸NCNA, 6 December, 1971, in Current Background, 72-4 (7 February, 1972), 15.

overwhelmingly in favor of an immediate end to the hostilities. An indication that China's repeated attacks on India and Soviet "imperialism" may have had their effect on the delegations from the Third World is provided by the fact that, of this bloc of nations, only Bhutan (whose vote is controlled by India) backed Indian resistance to ending military operations in East Bengal.⁶⁹

During the remainder of the war the tenor of Chinese speeches in the United Nations remained substantially unchanged. Official pronouncements emanating from Peking, however, differed slightly in emphasis from those made by China's delegation in New York. While employing much the same rhetoric to attack the Soviet Union as did the United Nations statements, the Peking attacks on India were more explicit, harsher in tone, and proportionately more frequent than those made by the Chinese delegations in the Security Council.⁷⁰ Often attacking Prime Minister Gandhi and other Indian officials by name, the Peking statements appeared, both in tenor and content, to have been intended to achieve a somewhat different purpose than the others. The PRC's United Nations speeches seemed primarily designed

⁶⁹Phillips Talbot, "The Subcontinent: Manage A. Trois," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 50, No. 4 (July, 1972), p. 708.

⁷⁰Current Background, 72-4 (7 February, 1972), entire issue.

to advance China's own interests by creating suspicion and distrust of Indo-Soviet "imperialism", especially among the Afro-Asian countries, and to benefit Pakistan's cause incidentally. The Peking pronouncements, on the other hand, appeared to have been intended to exert as much direct pressure on New Dehli as possible, and therefore may be considered to be the principal elements in Peking's efforts to "support" Pakistan through diplomatic rather than military means. An example of such a statement, a "commentator" article in the 8 December issue of People's Daily, could be considered to carry an implied threat of Chinese military action:

Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi goes so far as to advertise her patronage of the "Bangla Desh" puppet regime as something which will "set an example of good neighborliness. . . ." However, the Indian government . . . has openly declared part of the territory of another sovereign country an "independent state," in an attempt to impose on that other country the puppet regime it has engineered itself. Does this "example of good neighborliness" mean that India's neighbors may send troops into India's West Bengal, Punjab, etc., and create a "West Bangla Desh" or "Sikkistan"?⁷¹

The following day, the PRC's Acting Foreign Minister, Ch'i Peng-fei, warned India:

We would like to advise the Indian government that it had better honestly accept the resolution

⁷¹NCNA, 8 December, 1971, in Current Background 72-4 (7 February, 1972, 13).

of the U.N. General Assembly and not alienate itself from the people of the world. If it should wilfully persist in its uncrupulous and perverse course, it will in the end certainly eat the bitter fruit of its own making.⁷²

On the day of the Pakistani surrender in the East, there was a qualitative change in Peking's attacks on New Delhi. The Chinese Foreign Ministry accused India of sending a patrol across the China-Sikkim border for the purpose of conducting reconnaissance, charging that the Indian move was "a grave encroachment upon Chinese territory."⁷³ The significance of the Chinese protest would seem to lie in its timing, rather than in the nature of the protest itself. According to the Chinese report, the incursion occurred on 10 December, six days before the charge was made in Peking. This delay may simply point up the difficulty of Peking's communications with its outposts on the Himalayan border with India. On the other hand, it may be that the Chinese deliberately delayed releasing the protest until the issue in the East was resolved. They could thus give the appearance of increasing pressure on New Delhi, while avoiding causing concern in Moscow that China would take any action on the border which might affect Indian operations in Bengal. The similarity to events in 1965, when China waited until after

⁷²NCNA, 9 December, 1971, in Current Background, 72-4 (7 February, 1972), 20.

⁷³NCNA, 16 December, 1971, in SCMP, 71-52 (27-30 December, 1971), 79.

hostilities between India and Pakistan had ceased before making "threatening" troop movements on the Sino-Indian border, makes it likely that the latter explanation is the most probable.

While Chinese diplomatic efforts on Pakistan's behalf were vigorously pursued and highly visible, they were of little real help to Pakistan once war broke out. The limited material assistance that China provided during the war was probably also of negligible value to the Pakistani war effort. Although Chinese military aid to Pakistan in the past had been quite substantial, the short duration of the war in December made it practically impossible for Peking substantially to augment the amount of supplies and equipment that Pakistan had on hand at the outbreak of hostilities. However, one ship loaded with Chinese arms and ammunition was diverted to Karachi from the East Pakistan port of Chittagong before the Indian naval blockade made resupply by sea impossible, and it was reported by military authorities in Islamabad that in the final days of the war, Peking flew in more than 200,000 rounds of tank and anti-aircraft ammunition.⁷⁴ But by then, of course, it is doubtful that any amount of Chinese aid could have altered the final outcome.

⁷⁴New York Times, 25 December, 1971, p. 2, col. 3.

On the 16th, Pakistani forces surrendered in the East. The next day the cease-fire was extended to the Western front. The war was over.

For Peking, the creation of an independent Bangladesh, the emergence of a vastly stronger India and a weaker, truncated Pakistan, would require a fresh appraisal of Chinese policies toward the subcontinent. That China's leaders were fully aware not only of the new realities of South Asia, but also of the opportunities created by the war for Chinese exploitation of the continued political instability of the subcontinent, may have been revealed in remarks by Chou En-lai on 17 December:

The Indian aggressors and the social-imperialists had better not rejoice too much. The fall of Dacca is definitely not a so-called "milestone" towards victory for the Indian aggressors, but the starting point of endless strife on the South Asian subcontinent. . . .⁷⁵

75NCNA, 17 December, 1971, in SCMP, 71-52 (27-30 December, 1971), 144.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the light of China's professed support for "wars of national liberation", and her demonstrated support for revolutionary movements in many of the Third World countries, Peking's decision in 1971 to back the military regime in West Pakistan against the independence movement in East Bengal appeared to many Western observers to be contradictory. The hypothesis set forth in the Introduction to this paper, however, is that China's action is not contradictory when viewed in the context of the entire spectrum of foreign policies which Peking has exercised since 1949, and when the exigencies of the international situation faced by the PRC in 1971 are considered.

The purpose of this research, then, was to investigate the circumstances surrounding China's decision to back West Pakistan in an effort to determine why, in this particular instance, the PRC was willing to deny support to a genuine "people's war". In order to do this, it was necessary first to place in perspective China's relations with the principal participants in the Bangla Desh crisis - India and Pakistan. Having accomplished this, it was then

necessary to examine Peking's past foreign policies in order to determine whether support for "wars of national liberation" has remained an unvarying factor in Chinese foreign relations.

As discussed in Chapter II, China's relations with Pakistan have historically been largely devoid of an ideological component. Instead, the Sino-Pakistan relationship has been characterized, on both sides, by pragmatic considerations of national interest. This is borne out by the fact that even at the height of its support for the Naxalite uprisings in India, Peking passed up the opportunity for similar action across the border in East Bengal out of consideration for its relations with Islamabad.

On the other hand, ideology played an important role in Peking's attitude toward, and relations with, India. This became increasingly true after the early 1960's. As was pointed out in Chapter III, relations between India and the PRC grew markedly worse as a result of the 1962 border war, and competition between them for influence among the countries of the Third World was intensified. China became convinced that India not only was no longer "non-aligned," but that she had allied herself with the West and with the Soviet Union, and thus had become a pawn of the "imperialists" and "social-imperialists".

As the Sino-Soviet dispute worsened, Peking became alarmed, also, that the Soviet Union was holding India up to Burma, Indonesia and other countries of the Third World as an example of the efficacy of such "revisionist" concepts as "peaceful transition". Thus, disproving the success of the Indian model of development became increasingly important to China, both in the context of the Sino-Soviet dispute and in its competition with India for influence in the Third World. It is in this light that one can view Chinese support for the Naxalite rebellions of the late 1960s.

From Chapter IV, it can be seen that China has not unwaveringly supported every revolutionary movement which has occurred since 1949. Quite to the contrary, Peking has in fact been very selective in proffering her support. Thus, although her professed desire to foster revolution world-wide is a constant rhetorical element in Chinese diplomacy, it nevertheless can be concluded that China does not view revolutionary situations in purely ideological terms. The past record indicates that China, like all other nations, accords primary significance to those factors which will affect her national security most directly. Thus, Peking will not dogmatically support a revolutionary movement in the face of the threat to her security which such a course might create.

That very rarely can the ideological and "national-interest" components of any situation be "factored-out" and considered separately, however, is shown by the Bangla Desh crisis. Here, China was faced with having to make two decisions - eight months apart and under different circumstances. The ideological factor was a major consideration in April when China was forced to choose between Pakistan and Bangla Desh. In December, however, ideology played a much smaller role, as considerations of national interest (i.e., security) became dominant. But even so, the lines of distinction between ideology and national interest cannot be seen clearly. For China in April, it was not simply a choice of supporting Bangla Desh and thereby maximizing ideological goals, or supporting Pakistan and thereby maximizing goals associated with the pragmatic pursuit of "national-interest" objectives, i.e., United Nations membership, and improvement of her international image. Although China was well aware of the danger of being condemned by the Soviet Union on ideological grounds, she nevertheless opted for the preservation of her relations with Pakistan. In doing so, however, she strongly attacked both India and the Soviet Union for interfering in the internal affairs of another country. This, of course, was directed to the Third World countries, and especially those of the Afro-Asian bloc, which would be understandably apprehensive at the prospect of Indian or Soviet intervention in their own domestic politics. Thus,

Peking sought to make a virtue out of necessity by attempting to advance her own interests in the Third World at the expense of India and the Soviet Union.

In December, China had to decide how it could best fulfill its obligation to Pakistan, while ensuring that it did not jeopardize its improved international position, or provoke a Soviet military response. The course of action which Peking eventually followed permitted China to achieve the national-interest aspect of her policy objectives - that is, to preserve both her security and her relationship with Pakistan. At the same time, China once again was able to minimize danger to her ideological position, and perhaps even to strengthen it, by mounting a strong attack both in the United Nations and from Peking on Indian expansionism and Soviet "revisionist social-imperialism".

It is concluded, then, that the hypothesis set forth in this paper has been verified and upheld by the research which has been conducted. The actions of the PRC during the crisis in East Bengal in 1971 can be regarded as contradictory only if the situation is viewed without taking into account all of the considerations which Peking faced at the time, and the flexibility which China has demonstrated in the conduct of its foreign relations in the past.

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